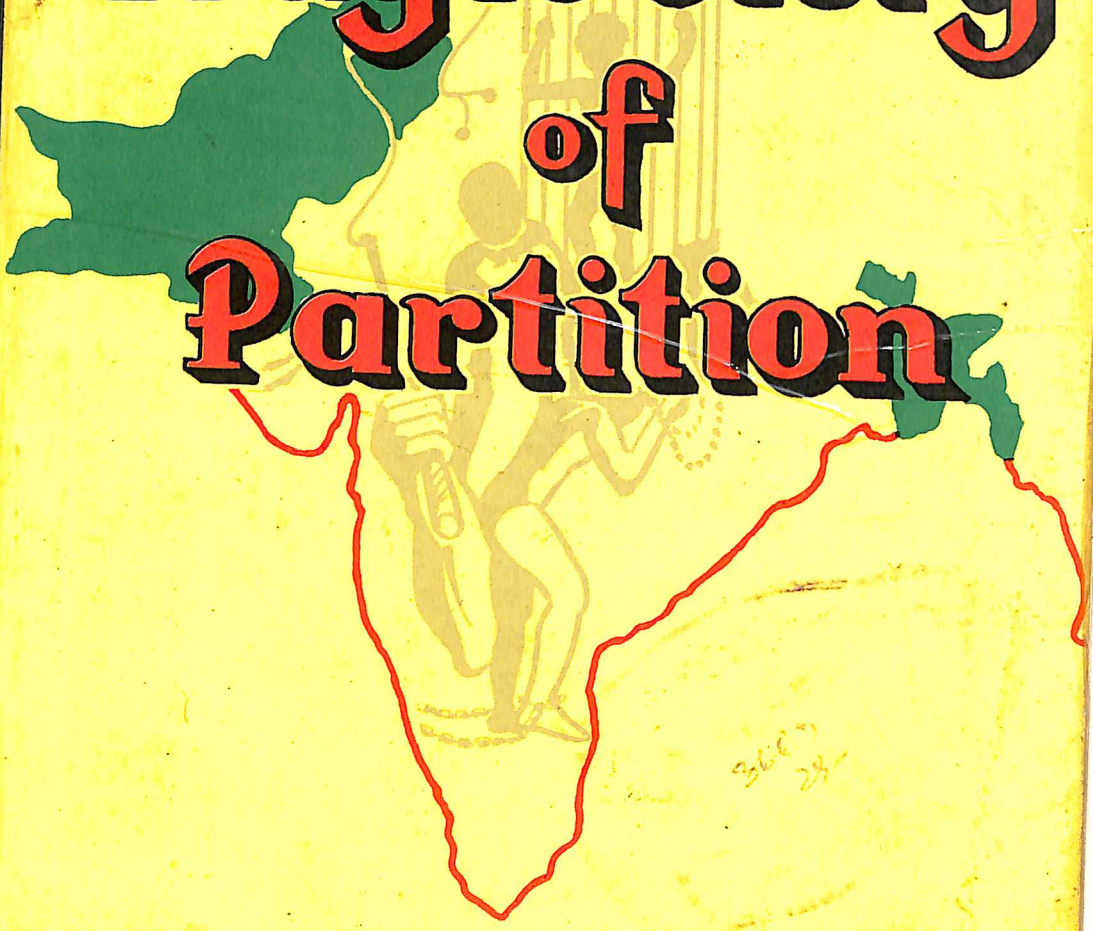
The Tragic Story of Partition



H. V. SESHADRI

श्री रघुवीर संस्कृतानुसन्धान पुस्तकालय
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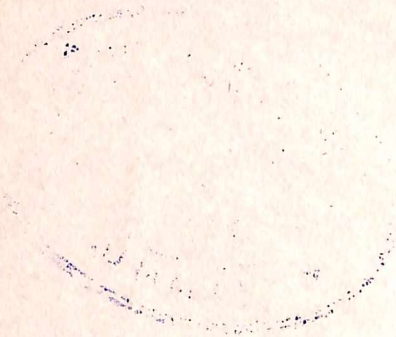

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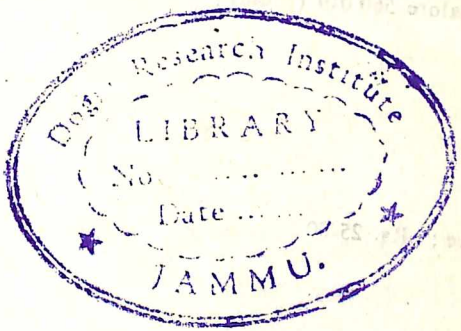

JAGARANA PRAKASHANA • BANGALORE

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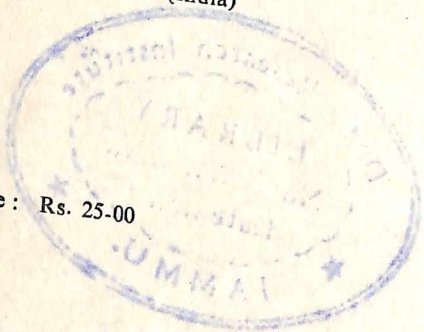

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IN HOMAGE

TO

THOSE HEROIC SOULS WHO LAID DOWN THEIR LIVES
IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO SAVE
THE INNOCENT MILLIONS CAUGHT IN THE HOLOCAUST OF PARTITION,
A HOLOCAUST UNPARALLELED IN THE ANNALS OF
HUMAN HISTORY FOR ITS SHEER MAGNITUDE OF
GENOCIDE, DESTRUCTION, DISHONOUR AND
UPROOTING OF SCORES OF MILLIONS
FROM THEIR MOTHER-EARTH

T227

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

(First edition)

THE PRESENT publication, it is hoped, fulfils a long and keenly felt need. There have no doubt been voluminous and well documented writings dealing with the transfer of power in India, the pre-1947 Muslim problem, the genesis of Pakistan and story of the freedom struggle. However, crucial questions such as, "Was Partition inevitable ?" "Has the fateful event of Partition any lessons for our future generations, any warnings for our national leadership, so that history may not repeat itself ?" – have never been satisfactorily faced or convincingly answered. Much less has the question "Could Partition have been avoided, and if so, how ?" been answered on the basis of solid facts and cogent arguments.

The present publication, based upon a factual, truthful and impartial study of the various factors and stages of that crucial chapter in our nation's history, seeks to furnish answers to such queries. Jagarana Prakashana is immensely grateful to Sri H. V. Seshadri for enabling it to publish this study which is the result of long and arduous labour. We hope this publication will inspire more such studies in the hands of historiographers and will further help our people to get an insight into the historical background of the grim challenges being posed to the nation's integrity in the present times.

We are thankful to Rashtrotthana Mudranalaya, its staff and all the workers for the care bestowed on the production of the book.

31st October 1982

(Second edition)

WE HAVE pleasure in offering to readers a second edition of this important study. While there have been numerous books dealing with the Partition of Bharat, perhaps in no other work has the chronological sequence of events leading to the creation of Pakistan been analysed in such depth and with such a historical perspective. The text has been somewhat revised and amplified for this popular re-issue.

The first edition which came out two years ago was well received in many quarters. The fact that all the copies were sold out in less than ten months bespeaks the need that existed for such a work. It is also gratifying that a Hindi version of the work has already been brought out and proved popular. Arrangements are under way to bring out the work in a few other languages.

We hope this edition will receive the same warm response in the hands of readers as was evoked by the first edition.

Bangalore
1st October 1984

JAGARANA PRAKASHANA

PREFACE

CERTAIN interpretations of historical events are often taken as gospel truths. History thus becomes tailored to suit that interpretation, which in turn becomes an authentic chronicle of historical developments for future generations. Especially when the events are of the recent past and leading political figures have taken part in them, this tendency is sure to be all the more pronounced. Naturally, in the process, history gets distorted. A distorted and garbled version of history can serve neither as a point of inspiration nor as a warning to the nation in its future march.

Something like this appears to have happened in the case of the Partition of our country also. The Partition has been undoubtedly the most crucial and tragic event in the entire chequered course of our nation's history over the millennia. In the past one thousand years, many parts of our country had been ruled first by Muslims and then by the British, but the nation had never compromised, in principle, their sovereignty over any part of the motherland. As a result, our nation never ceased to strive for throwing out the aggressors and liberate those parts. And history tells us that ultimately it did succeed in freeing the entire land from the clutches of foreign invaders. However, for the first time, Partition conceded a moral and legal right to them over certain parts of the country and declared an ignominious finale to the one thousand year old heroic struggle of freedom.

Thus, it was an act of humiliating surrender on the point of principle. The usual present-day interpretation of Partition, however, does not utter a word about this aspect. Even while conceding Partition to be a tragedy, it is sought to be made out as the only practical way out then available - as the inevitable price for achieving Independence.

It is this basic premise of inevitability or justifiability of Partition that needs to be critically examined. Queries like: "Was Partition unavoidable ?", "What were the factors which ultimately led to that disastrous end ?", "Does it hold any warnings for the powers-that-be of the present day ?", "Has it left any legacy to be cherished and any dream to be fulfilled by the future generations ?" - all such questions demand answers - answers which are factual, truthful, authentic and cogent. The present volume is an humble attempt in that direction.

One more word. History is a non-respecter of persons. It shows up the spectacular successes of the great ones as much as their dismal failures. Thus, it helps us form an integrated image of the personalities and organisations which have shaped the destiny of nations. For example, the roles played by such ones in the recent historic freedom struggle of Bharat naturally bring out the bright as well as the not-so-bright spots of them all. Those leaders were the unchallenged captains of the freedom struggle who had lit the spark of heroic resistance to the foreign rule, dormant in the nation's soul. The part that quite a few of them played in several other fields of national renaissance also was no less notable. The present discussion –being restricted to the Partition aspect of the freedom movement– does not touch upon all those other aspects. It is clear, a balanced evaluation of those national figures will be possible only after taking into account their roles in all such fields also.

The chief source of inspiration for me in writing this story lay in the illuminating talks of Sri Yadava Rao Joshi, presently the Joint General Secretary of Rashtreeya Swayamsevak Sangh, which lit up the various facets of the freedom struggle in their historical perspective. The stirring narration of the story of Partition by Sri K. Sripati Shastry, Lecturer in History, Pune, in April 1972 at Bangalore in the Rashtrotthana Parishat Lecture Series had shed further light on many an obscure aspect. And then, my special trip to Delhi for a critical perusal of the typescript by Sri Malkani, Chief Editor, *Organiser* Weekly, and Sri Devendra Swaroop, Director, Pandit Deendayal Research Institute, was amply rewarded. They have, apart from giving certain useful general suggestions, enriched the present volume – Malkaniji by furnishing many interesting sidelights and Devendraji by suggesting quite a few valuable books of reference. To all of them I owe a deep debt of gratitude.

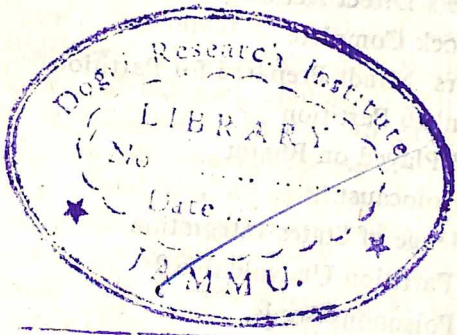
Painstaking assistance rendered in various ways by Sriyuts K. S. Nagaraj, K. R. Rajagopal, H. M. Kamath, retired Editor of *Indian Express*, Bombay, K. Suryanarayana Rao, Madras, and Raghunath Jahagirdar in preparing the manuscript, the meticulous care shown by Sri S. R. Ramaswamy, Chief Editor of *Utthana* monthly, in correcting the proofs, and Sri M. C. Jayadeva, Chief Executive of Rashtrotthana Parishat, and

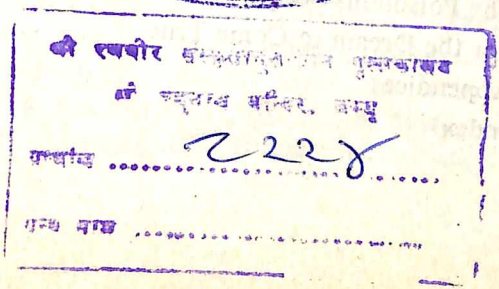
other friends, in bringing out the book in its present elegant form, has been invaluable. It has been a labour of love for all of them, and I cannot adequately express my heartfelt gratitude to them. My special thanks are due to Jagarana Prakashana, Bangalore, the Publishers of the present volume.

It is in a spirit of rendering a duty towards our people who need to be told the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, with all its lessons and warnings, about an event which continues to cast its dark shadow over our country even to this day, that I took to the challenging job of penning this thesis. It is now for the discerning readers to judge how far the attempt has been successful.

Bangalore
October 1982

H. V. SESHADRI





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1

Crucial Hour of Freedom Struggle

ALEXANDER, the first foreign aggressor to set his foot on Bharatvarsha (327 B.C.), had to sound an ignominious and hasty retreat within three years, his army utterly demoralised and all but destroyed. Within a short span of seven years, owing to the far-sightedness and prowess of Chanakya and Chandragupta, even the faintest footprints of that "world-conqueror" remained no more on the soil of Bharatvarsha. Then came the hordes of Kushans (1st century A.D.) from Central Asia only to be defeated and sucked into the powerful current of the national life here. Kanishka, their most celebrated emperor, turned into an ardent follower of Buddhism, and became a 'Second Ashoka' in spreading its noble message far and wide. The barbaric Shakas (1st century A.D.) and the Huns (5th century A.D.), who followed, cut deep into the body of Hindusthan; the whole of the North reeled and tottered for a while under the blows of Mihirgula and Torman. But again, from the bosom of Bharatvarsha rose a host of redoubtable warrior-statesmen – Harshavardhana, Yashodharma, Vikramaditya and Shalivahana – who raised high the flag of national honour and liberty shaking off the shackles of defeat and slavery. In course of time the aggressors themselves came under the spell of this land and became inseparably united with her children.

The invasions of the various Muslim tribes which began in the 7th century A. D. gathered tremendous momentum under Mohammed Ghazni (11th century A.D.) and Mohammed Ghori (12th century A.D.). The invading tribes of Turks, Arabs, Iranians, Moghuls and Afghans descended on Bharatvarsha like locusts spreading their tentacles over the entire country, leaving behind in their trail a horrid tale of death, destruction and desecration. For 800 years Hindusthan waged a relentless

freedom struggle – probably the most stirring saga of crusade for national freedom witnessed anywhere on the face of the earth. From Maharana Kumbha to Maharana Pratap Simha and Rajasimha in Rajasthan, from Hakka and Bukka to Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagar fame in the South, from Chhatrapati Shivaji to the Peshwas in Maharashtra, from the various martyr-Gurus of the Sikhs including Guru Govind Singh to Banda Bairagi and Ranjit Singh in the Punjab, from Chhatrasal in Bundelkhand to Lachit Barfukan in Assam – countless captains of the war of independence piloted the ship of freedom and steered her forward through perilous tides and tempests. As a result of their ceaseless and crushing blows, the conquering sword of Islam finally lay in dust, shattered to pieces. As Moulana Hali bewailed, "The Islamic armada, which had sailed the seven seas unchallenged and remained invincible, when it came to Hindusthan met its watery grave in the Ganga."

It was at this crucial juncture – just before the liberating nationalist forces had time to gather the lessons of their past failures and successes and recoup their depleted strength – that the country was caught in the coils of a far more crafty and organised invader – the English. However, the heroic sons of Bharatvarsha once again rose to shake off the stranglehold of the new enemy. The national revolt of 1857 shook the British rule to its roots. Though the British heaved a sigh of deep relief at their providential escape, the trauma of that terrible experience had made them tremble at the flames of nationalism blazing in the nation's heart. They became only too well aware of the seething volcano underneath their throne.

The Birth of National Renaissance

That marked the advent of a new wave of national awakening and resistance which, as years passed, began quickly rising all over the land. While in the Punjab Swami Dayananda Saraswati rekindled the embers of national faith and self-respect through the Arya Samaj, spiritual giants like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Rama Tirtha, Ramana Maharshi and Yogi Aurobindo breathed the immortal spirit of our cultural ethos into the masses. The triumphant march of Swami Vivekananda in the West and later his wnirlwind tour of the country roused the dormant manliness of the people and

fired the heart of the youth with the inspiring vision of their national life-mission. *'Vande Mataram'* – an inspired Bengali song by Bankimchandra Chatterjee – crossed the boundaries of Bengal and soon became the battle-cry of the war of national independence for the entire country. The movements for social reform pioneered by Raja Rammohun Roy, by Keshabchandra Sen through Brahmo Samaj, by Mahadev Govind Ranade through Prarthana Samaj, and by Mahatma Phule and others, contributed in no small measure to rousing the will and confidence of the people in meeting the many challenges facing the nation.

Many were the directions in which efforts were launched to root out the causes which had led to the downfall and degeneration of the nation. The movement for forging a common and united national resolve and pulling down the barriers of province, language, caste, sect and a hundred other superficial differences began quickly gaining force and momentum.

The contribution made by the moderates too – who swore 'loyalty' to the British Crown – was not insignificant. Here is what Sir Henry Cotton, Chief Secretary to the Bengal Government, wrote in 1878, regarding the impact of the country-wide tour of Surendranath Banerjea : "... A quarter of a century ago... the idea of any Bengalee influence in the Punjab would have been a conception incredible. Yet it is the case that during the past year the tour of a Bengalee lecturer, lecturing in English in upper India, assumed the character of a triumphal progress ; and at the present moment the name of Surendranath Banerjea excites as much enthusiasm among the rising generation of Multan as in Dacca".[1]* And this was, we must remember, well before the advent of the Congress.

Crescendo of Freedom Struggle

The daring and death-defying episodes of countless revolutionary heroes and their acts of supreme sacrifice and martyrdom within the country as well as abroad stirred the nation's soul to its depths. Their thundering message of freedom burnt itself into the veins of the youth as no other single factor had done before or after. The foreign rulers

* References are given at the end of the chapter.

shuddered at the revolutionary rumblings sweeping all over the country. The great leaders of the revolutionary upsurge, from Ramsingh Kuka in the Punjab and Wasudev Balwant Phadke in Maharashtra to Veer Sarvarkar, Chandrasekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh, Rashbehari Basu and V. V. S. Iyer became the deathless symbols carrying to the young hearts the message of the glory of suffering and sacrifice at the altar of the Motherland. And it was this inspired younger generation, which later on bore the main brunt in the massive people's movements launched by Tilak and Gandhiji.

It was left to the genius of Lokmanya Tilak, who had his fingers on the pulse of the nation, to give a decisive turn to the freedom struggle by involving in it the common mass of people. It was Valentine Chirol, a Britisher, who gave Tilak the meaningful sobriquet 'the father of Indian unrest'. The true and ennobling vision of Independence was mirrored before the nation's mind by the famous trio – Lal, Bal and Pal (Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal) and further reinforced by Aurobindo Ghose and Annie Besant. While Aurobindo Ghose and Bankimchandra Chatterjee sublimated nationalism into the worship of Divine Mother as a spiritual *sadhana*, Lokmanya Tilak thundered "Swaraj is my birth-right and I will have it" and blazed the path of Karma Yoga to achieve it.

The arena was thus made ready for Mahatma Gandhi to assume charge as the final and supreme commander of the freedom struggle. Simple instruments like Charkha became, in the hands of that wizard, the messengers of the call of Swarajya to the masses. The salt in the ocean and grass in the jungle became symbols of national defiance. Not merely in politics, but through many other channels as well, he initiated programmes to rouse the spirit of oneness and love of the country among the masses. His simple and austere ways, his dress and food, his talk and walk – all these projected in their minds the hallowed image of an ancient seer. The success he achieved in creating fortitude and fearlessness, discipline and devotion among a vast and diverse mass of people such as ours was indeed unparalleled. *'Bharat Mata-Ki-Jai'*, *'Vande Mataram'* and *Mahatma Gandhi-Ki-Jai'* became the triple battle-cries of those facing the bullets and batons of the

British. To this was joined the thunderous roar of *'Jai Hind'* of the Azad Hind forces led by Subhas Chandra Bose setting aflame the nation's imagination with an unprecedented upsurge of revolutionary ardour. And that final blow indeed sounded the signal that the freedom struggle had reached its culmination.

On the other side of the battle line, the power of the British arms had been considerably depleted as a result of the Second World War. The Indian Army, the Navy, the Police and Civil Service too were animated with the fast spreading spirit of liberty. The British realised that their time was up. They decided to quit. They announced a date on which they would transfer power to Indians and bid good-bye to their imperial hold on Bharat. The midnight of 14–15 August 1947 was chosen as that historic hour of the ushering of freedom.

Was this the 'Tryst with Destiny'?

Just a few minutes before the midnight hour of 14–15 August of 1947 was to strike, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who was to become the first Prime Minister of Independent Bharat spoke to the nation with poetic fervour: "Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny ... At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance."

A few moments later, as that dark midnight of Amavasya passed, thirty-one guns boomed hearlding the dawn of Free Bharat.

The proud Union Jack which was fluttering over Bharat unchallenged was finally lowered and the Tricolour of Independent Bharat rose in its place.

But, just a few hours before this turn of history, it had taken another crucial twist. On the very same soil of Bharat had appeared another independent State – Pakistan!

Bharat had been cut into two!

Did the "tryst with destiny" which our leaders had made long years ago include this crucial twist of history also? Was it the picture of a divided Bharat which had been the cherished vision of all our freedom fighters including Pandit Nehru?

The full magnitude of this final act of the tragic drama – of a golden dream turning into a mutilated reality and a solemn pledge resulting in its gross negation – can be appreciated better against the backdrop of the past utterances of the chief actors themselves.

The Indian National Congress had assembled at Lahore for its historic session in 1929-30 under the presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru. On the midnight of that December 31 he had administered to our countrymen the pledge of Complete Independence. The holy waters of Ravi bore witness to that sacred commitment to the Nation's Goal. But now, that very river found no place in the Independent Bharat over which Pandit Nehru was to preside as its main architect. The very city of Lahore which put the seal on that national commitment had become alien to its sons and daughters. INDEPENDENCE was incomplete. The vision of Free Bharat had been defaced. That auspicious moment had been defiled.

In the past, when the Muslim League raised the cry of Pakistan, Nehru had poohpoohed it as 'fanatastic nonsense.' But the same 'fantasy' had now become a stark reality.

And what was the dream which Mahatma Gandhi had nurtured in his bosom? Was there any place in it for the maimed and dismembered picture of the Motherland?

In 1940, the Muslim League had adopted the Pakistan resolution. And this was how Gandhiji, writing in several issues of *Harijan,* had reacted to this demand :

"The 'two nations' theory is an untruth...Those whom God has made one, man will never be able to divide."[2]

"Partition means a patent untruth. My whole soul rebels against the idea...To assent to such a doctrine is for me a denial of God. I would employ every non-violent means to prevent it. For, it means the undoing of centuries of work done by numberless Hindus and Muslims, to live together as one Nation."[3]

"To divide India into two is worse than anarchy. It is a vivisection which cannot be tolerated. Vivisect me before you vivisect India. You shall not do what even the Moghuls, who ruled over India for over two centuries, did not do."[4]

"I see nothing but seeds of further quarrel in it."[5]

Could there have been any assertion more emphatic and

more forceful than these flaming words of Gandhiji ? In fact, his voice of fierce opposition to partition continued almost until that fateful day. But still, before his very eyes, the disaster of vivisection had taken place.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, another stalwart of the Congress, wrote a scholarly book *India Divided* during his prison days in 1945. He had, in a most dispassionate and cogent manner, analysed the demand for Pakistan and had proved how it was wholly impractical, from whatever angle it be argued – geographical, historical, social, economic, or of defence. However, even before the ink on his paper had dried that 'impractical, and 'impossible' proposal had taken shape and turned into a hard fact of life. And the author of that treatise himself adorned the seat as the first President of the Republic of truncated Bharat.

It would be instructive, further, to note the resolutions of the Indian National Congress in this regard. After the Muslim League had adopted the Pakistan resolution, it became inevitable for the Congress to state clearly its stand vis-a-vis that demand. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya become seized with anxiety and felt that the fears and misgivings aroused in the minds of people on account of the League's resolution needed to be immediately dispelled. He met Gandhiji and poured out his mind.

Gandhiji assured him that he would not allow partition to take place under any circumstances. However, Pandit Malaviya wanted the Congress to declare this stand publicly through an official resolution. It was in this background that the Congress at its Allahabad session in 1942 adopted the famous *Akhand Hindusthan* Resolution moved by Pt. Jagat Narain of U. P. In that resolution the Congress had categorically affirmed its faith in the unity of the country and set its face firmly against partition in any form or manner.

Further, the January of 1946 saw the crucial general elections. Every one knew that their outcome would prove crucial in deciding the future political set-up of the country. By then it was fairly well recognised that the British had made up their mind to quit. The question therefore weighing heavily on the mind of every thinking Indian was this : Would the country, after the British had left, remain united ? Or would it be divided ?

The Congress and Muslim League were the two main contending parties. The League had gone to the Muslim voters with the cry of Pakistan. The Congress, on the other hand, sought the nation's mandate for safeguarding the integrity of the country. The League won an overwhelming majority of Muslim seats. The Hindu voters on the other hand solidly voted for the Congress. The Hindu populace had unreservedly placed its trust in the Congress pledge of upholding the unity of the country and had breathed a sigh of relief when the Congress came out victorious.

However, when the new Viceroy Lord Mountbatten announced on 3rd June 1947 the plan of transfer of power, it came as a stunning blow to the people. For, that plan, approved by Nehru and Patel, had envisaged the cutting up of Bharat and creation of Pakistan !

But the people still refused to believe that Congress would given in. On June 15th, however even that flickering hope was extinguished. On that day, the All India Congress Committee affixed its seal of approval to the Partition Plan. All the great and trusted leaders of the Congress had turned their back on the sacred oaths they had taken, and the pledges they had administered to the people previously.

What took place on the midnight of 14-15 August of 1947 was this gross betrayal of the nation's faith, the betrayal of the dreams of countless fighters and martyrs who had plunged into the fire of freedom struggle with the vision of *Akhand Bharat* in their hearts. Gandhiji himself confessed this, his heart torn with anguish. On the eve of Sri Prakasha's departure to Karachi as Bharat's ambassador to Pakistan, he met Gandhiji. The latter, his voice choked with emotion and tears swelling in his eyes, said : "My life's dream has been shattered, my life-mission has gone down the drain."

Earlier, when acceptance of the Partition Plan by all the parties concerned was announced, he had burst forth : " The work of half a century has been undone. I see nothing but raging fires and rivers of blood before me. This means complete ruination *(sarvnaash)* !"[6]

The Vision that was Defiled

It was not merely the living vision of Gandhiji and count-

less other fighters and martyrs that had been demolished. No, it was something far more holy and eternal, a far more enduring faith, a far deeper perception which had entered the very marrow of the nation. Indeed how many were the seers and sages, poets and prophets – right from the Vedic age up to the modern times – who had fostered in the nation's breast the integrated and whole picture of Bharat as the Divine Mother! Bharat, in their eyes, was not a mere clod of clay. It was verily the *Matrubhoomi*, the *Punyabhoomi*, the *Dharmabhoomi*, the *Devabhoomi*, the *Karmabhoomi* – all sublimated into one single majestic figure of Bharat Mata. To Bankimchandra, She appeared as the triple manifestation of Saraswati, Lakshmi and Durga. Rabindranath Tagore visualised Her as *Devi bhuvanamanamohini* – the divine enchantress of the world. To Swami Vivekananda, She was the Mother of all the thirty-three crores of gods and goddesses – Whose worship would gratify all those myriad deities. Guruji Golwalkar visualised Her as the Trinity of *Mata* – the loving mother, *Pita* – the protecting father and *Guru* – the elevating spiritual guide.

The unity of Bharat is so basic to its nature, so sublime in its depths – in fact, an inseparable aspect of its national soul. It is not something to be bartered or bargained about at the counter of political expediency.

It was this timeless national vision, this adored picture of motherhood, that was shattered on the night of 14-15 August of 1947.

An Englishman, J. Ramsay Macdonald, at one time the Prime Minister of Britain, wrote: "The Hindu, at any rate, from his tradition and his religion, regards India not only as a political unit naturally the subject of one sovereignty – but as the outward embodiment, as the temple – nay, even as the goddess mother – of his spiritual culture. India and Hinduism are organically related as body and soul. Nationality is at best a difficult thing to define, to test and establish...But the Aryan settled it decisively so far as India and himself are concerned. He made India the symbol of his culture, he filled it with his soul. In his consciousness it was his greater self."[7]

It was this temple, this divine mother, this national soul which was desecrated on that dark night of August 14–15.

Partition proved to be, in terms of practical effects too, a tragedy of such terrible dimensions as was never witnessed even during the most harrowing days of Muslim hegemony.

Millions of devoted and loving children of Bharatvarsha had been overnight turned into subjects of a fanatically anti-Hindu State. River Sindhu became alien to crores of her progeny and the birth-place of the Vedas was turned over to their inveterate foes. Crores upon crores of brothers and sisters on either side of the dividing line became foreigners to each other. Lakhs perished in the ensuing genocide. Unspeakable atrocities were let loose on men, women and children. Temples, pilgrimage centres and all holy places were razed to the ground. A whole sea of humanity was uprooted and rivers of human wrecks trekked on to unknown destinations. And 15 August 1947 was that day which gave birth to this calamity unparalleled in the annals of human history for its sheer enormity.

And Pandit Nehru himself, a witness to this holocaust, later on exclaimed : "If only I could have foreseen these dreadful results I would never have consented to Partition."

Could there be a more tragic twist to the "tryst with destiny" that the country had made long years ago? Was this how our nation, long suppressed, had sought to find utterance?

Such a great national calamity, it is obvious, could not have come about all of a sudden. Such drastic turns of history can only mature in the womb of time with congenial circumstances continuously nourishing them. Where, then, lay the poisonous seed? Who were all the chief actors, who watered it? And what were their respective roles?

Such are the queries posed by that dark night of Partition, August 14–15, 1947.

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2

Breaking up Hindu Morale

THE THREE main actors in the tragic drama of Partition were: the British, the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress. What were the strategies and counter-strategies that these three forces adopted to secure their respective goals? And with what results? Who, in this triangular war of nerves, came out victorious? And who was the one humbled? A dispassionate look into these various facets of the story will lay before us a true and clear picture of that most crucial period in the long and chequered history of our nation.

First, the British. They were, from the very start, keenly conscious of a basic lesson of Indian history. No foreign power – much less their own based some seven thousand miles away– could hope to hold their Indian empire merely on the strength of their arms. The Hindus had, after a ceaseless struggle of 800 years, successfully laid low the formidable Muslim domination. They – the British themselves – could establish their sway over the land more by aggravating and exploiting the internecine squabbles among the Hindu forces than by the strength of their arms. Even after they had firmly entrenched themselves here, the volcanic fire of Independence had all but swallowed them up in 1857. The British, therefore, began making efforts to divide and emasculate the Hindus in every possible way.

In addition to excluding from recruitment to the army whole areas like United Provinces, where both Hindu and Muslim regiments had revolted against the British in 1857, the British had further classified the Hindus into "martial" and "non-martial" races. Regions wherein the Hindu fighting forces had covered themselves with glory in recent warfares were depicted as "militarily sterile" and barred from entering the army. Historian K. M. Panikkar writes: "The Marathas, who

had shown outstanding military ability and valour, ceased to be counted as being martial as they had a marked sense of patriotism and could not be isolated from the rest of the community." Only certain communities among both Hindus and Muslims who could be depended upon for their absolute loyalty to the Empire became the special reservoir for recruitment to the army. "The policy of 'divide and rule' was nowhere more clearly practised than in the concessions shown to these classes who were made to believe for a long time that they were the special favourties of the Empire."[1]

Subverting Nation's Faith

The British were never in doubt that, ultimately, it was not by the bullet that they could hope to rule over this vast and varied land and its people. That could be achieved only by cutting at the roots of the nation's faith in its noble values which had been nourishing the people with the life-sap of the Spirit of Freedom. They therefore soon set about to subvert the deeply ingrained love and adoration for the motherland among our people and their pride and conviction in the loftiness of their cultural heritage.

Bharat was newly painted by the British brush as a 'continent' or a 'sub-continent', and not as a single country. Hindus, they said, were never a nation ; they were just a conglomeration of different and even hostile races, with nothing in common with each other to entitle them to be called a single people with a common history and common traditions or heritage. The original inhabitants here were conquered by the Aryan invaders and driven to the hills and jungles. Thus the entire past history of the country was steeped in unrelieved darkness, barbarity and superstitions.

Sir John Strachey who held some of the highest offices of State in India delivered a series of lectures in 1884 in the University of Cambridge. Giving out a substance of his speeches in a book, he wrote : "What is India ? What does this name India really signify ? The answer that I have sometimes given sounds paradoxical, but it is true. There is no such country and this is the first and most essential fact about India that can be learned. India is a name which we give to a great region including a multitude of different countries .... The differences

between the countries of India – between, for instance, Bengal and the Punjab or between Madras and Rajputana – seemed to them, on the other hand, immense, and beyond comparison, greater than those existing between the countries of Europe."[2]

Strachey also quotes Prof. Seeley to say "There was never any conquest of India by the English because there was no India and therefore properly speaking no foreigner." Extending the same argument Strachey stated that they had never destroyed in India a national government, no national sentiment had been wounded, and no national pride had been humiliated.[3]

Lord Curzon, another stalwart of British imperialism and for some time a Viceroy, declared: "I search my conscience and I ask myself who and what are the Indian people." Among the English officials it was common practice to call all Indian natives as 'damn niggers' – which expression was freely used even in official documents.

A powerful tool in the hands of the British imperialists to carry out the 'Operation Sabotage' of Hindu faith were the Christian missionaries. Besides mounting a barrage of calumny and vilification against Hindu Dharma, the Christian missionaries had taken to the clandestine path of conversion to their faith – especially of the tribals, Harijans and other backward sections – to subvert the national faith of Hindus and carve out special pockets of British dominance. That missionary invasion was a part of the overall British strategy was proved when the Prime Minister of British Lord Palmerston announced, just two years after the 1857 Revolt, that it was in the interest of Britain "to provide for the diffusion of Christianity throughout the length and breadth of India." Joseph Cornelius Kumarappa, the well-known Gandhian economist, once observed, "The Western military has four wings: the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Church."[4]

And surely enough, the Christian converts became the docile and obedient servants of the British master and refused to have anything to do with the Indian aspirations for freedom. T. R. Vedantam, an authority on the role of Christianity in Bharat, writes, "The Indian Christian community was fully on the side of the British, with only two exceptions, Mr. Joseph Cornelius Kumarappa and Mr. E. M. George. The Metropolitan Vs. Kumarappa case is both famous and notorious.

Mr. E. M. George's life was threatened and he was given asylum and protection by the Editor of "*The Statesman*", Calcutta. He had a lucky escape. These two were condemned and socially ostracised by the Christians. So Prof. Radhakrishnan had to say that "to the Indian Christians Jesus was marching with a sword in one hand and a Union Jack in the other."

"During the twenties and thirties of this era it was a common experience for the Pastors in Churches to choose I Timethy, Ch. 2. V. 1 for a sermon and exhort the faithful to be loyal to the British Government as a religious duty. The Indian Christians obeyed."[5]

Towards this end, a campaign was let out in full steam against all the venerated points of Hindu faith and tradition. A notorious book *Mother India* by one Miss Mayo which Gandhiji termed as 'a gutter inspector's report' was widely publicised. One of the most famous Christian missionaries, Bishop Heber, wrote about India, "Where every prospect pleases, but the man is vile."

The type of slanderous propaganda indulged in by the Christian missionaries was exposed by Swami Vivekananda: "What is meant by those pictures in the school-books for children where the Hindu mother is painted as throwing her children to the crocodiles in the Ganga ? The mother is black, but the baby is painted white, to arouse more sympathy, and get more money. What is meant by those pictures which paint a man burning his wife at a stake with his own hands, so that she may become a ghost and torment the husband's enemy ? What is meant by the pictures of huge cars crushing over human beings ? I have heard one of these gentlemen preach in Memphis that, in every village of India, there is a pond of the bones of little babies.... What have the Hindus done to these disciples of Christ that every Christian child is taught to call the Hindus 'vile' and 'wretches' and the most horrible demons on earth ?"[6]

Naturally, it was 'Divine Dispensation' which had brought the white man to the shores of Bharat. It was the 'White Man's Burden' to 'uplift the barbaric black and brown races.' Rudyard Kipling wrote a poem "White Man's Burden' in 1899 wherein he gives a call to the White Races:

Take up the White man's burden –
Send forth the best ye breed,

Go bind your sons to exile,
To serve your captives' needs;
On fluttered folk and wild –
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half-child.

Kipling goes on to describe the land and the people whom the Whites are to save and uplift as one of 'evil and sloth and heathen folly.'

It was towards fulfilling this 'divine purpose' that Lord Macaulay formulated a scheme of education for the Indians. In a letter addressed to his father he wrote:

"We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern – a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in moral and in intellect." And again, in 1836, he wrote to him: "No Hindu who has received an English education ever remains sincerely attached to his religion... If our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolater among the respectable classes in Bengal 30 years hence. And this will be effected without efforts to proselytise."[7] And it was the same gentleman who had opined that the entire ancient literature of Bharat could be accommodated in a single shelf of a modren European library. Such was the person who chose to become the *Guru* of Indian education!

Under Macaulay's dispensation our history opened with the chapter, "The Dark Age" – which was, in fact, a period of Bharat's unparalleled achievements in material as well as spiritual fields. Then followed the periods – Hindu, Muslim and British. The intent behind this kind of classification was obvious. The land belonged to those who for that period held the sceptre at Delhi. There were none who could be called the original children of this land, its natural masters. He who wielded the rod – to him the country belonged. It was only from now on that under the benign auspices of the British a new nation, a new people, had to take shape out of the heterogeneous mass of human beings inhabiting here. That the expression 'a nation in the making' freely played on the lips of our English-educated proved with what utter devotion they were lapping up these new homilies.

There was, indeed, a very powerful reason why our people succumbed to such mental submission. The unquestioned power, pomp and glory of the British empire and the spectacular strides the British had made in the physical sciences had overawed our people into gulping down all they said and did as examples to be followed and emulated. That was the path of progress, they felt, to equal them.

All the same, the British strongly suspected that all this brainwashing could well prove to be but a passing phase. The innate national spirit of the land might assert itself any day and the people would then sink their superficial differences and rally round the banner of freedom. That was the major warning of 1857. George W. Forrest wrote, "Among the many lessons the Indian Mutiny conveys to the historian, none is of greater importance than the warning that it is possible to have a Revolution in which Brahmins and Shudras, Hindus and Muhammedans could be united against us."[8]

Divide-and-rule tactics therefore became the thumb rule of British politics in every field of our national life. New-fangled theories were floated and policies initiated so as to set up every conceivable group – caste, sect, religion, province, language, etc., against one another and sow the seeds of mutual distrust and conflict. Controversies such as Aryan and Dravidian, Hindu and Sikh, Hindu and Jain, Hindu and Aboriginals, Hindu and Tribals were deliberately created and fanned.

Congress Founded as a 'Safety-Valve'

One particular move which the British initiated in the political field made a tremendous impact on the entire future course of national developments – something that even its authors could never have possibly imagined. The British had survived the challenge of 1857 – but the wrath of the common masses as well as the soldiers against the foreign rule continued to simmer underneath. Off and on it would burst forth in different parts of the country under one pretext or the other. The revolutionary outbursts in Maharashtra under Wasudev Balwant Phadke and of Ramsingh Kuka in the Punjab which had severely jolted the British were but straws in the wind.

Allan Octavian Hume, an English Officer, who had gone through the nerve-racking days of 1857 and who had his ears

pinned to the ground, clearly heard the rumblings underneath. Hume had received from over thirty thousand informers spread all over the country an intimation of momentous significance. The information therein left Hume in no doubt about "the imminent danger of a terrible outbreak owing to the economic sufferings of the masses and the alienation of the intellectuals." What would be the nature of that dreaded outbreak?

William Wedderburn in his biography of A. O. Hume states: "Innumerable entries referred to the secretion of old swords, spears, and matchlocks, which would be ready when required. What was predicted was a sudden violent outbreak of sporadic crimes, murders of obnoxious persons, robbery of bankers, looting of bazaars. In the existing state of the lowest half-starving masses, it was considered that the first few crimes would be the signal for hundreds of similar ones, and for a general development of lawlessness, paralysing the authorities and the respectable classes and that...a certain small number of the educated classes, at the time desperately, perhaps unreasonably, bitter against the Government, would join the movement, assume here and there the lead, give the outbreak cohesion and direct it as a national revolt."[9]

Hume was how convinced that some definite plan of action was urgently called for, to diffuse the mounting disaffection.

Wedderburn in his revealing biography of Hume further mentions: "The ill-starred measures of reaction, combined with Russian methods of police repression, brought India under Lord Lytton within measurable distance of a revolutionary outbreak, and it was only in time that Mr. Hume and his Indian advisers were inspired to intervene." And Hume himself candidly expressed the motive underlying his founding of the Congress: "A safety-valve for the escape of great and growing forces, generated by our own action, was urgently needed and no more efficacious safety-valve than our Congress movement could possibly be devised."[10]

The official history of the Indian National Congress by Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya also has vouched for this background to the founding of the Congress. He writes: "Mr. Hume had unimpeachable evidence that the political discontent was going underground. He came into possession of seven volumes containing report of the seething revolt incubating in various

districts, based upon the communications of the disciples of various gurus to their religious heads.... Hume thereupon resolved to open a safety-valve for this unrest and the Congress was such an outlet."[11]

The retiring Governor General Ripon had advised his successor Dufferin to discuss with Hume the conditions prevailing in the country, which would be of immense value to him in finding out how best the growing challenge could be met. Accordingly, Dufferin sent for Hume and discussed with him his plan of founding the Congress. To start with, Hume had no idea of making the Congress a political platform ; it was to be just a movement for social reform. It was Dufferin who convinced Hume of the desirability of making the Congress a political organisation.

Dufferin told Hume that "there was no body of persons in this country who performed the functions which Her Majesty's opposition did in England....It would be very desirable in their interests as well as the interests of the ruled that Indian Politicians should meet yearly and point out to the Government in what respects the administration was defective and how it could be improved. Lord Dufferin had made it a condition with Mr. Hume that his name should not be divulged, so long as he remained in the country.[12]

The annual sessions of the Congress in its initial stages were such as to beat out amply the intentions of its founding fathers. The programmes chalked out and leaders projected were such as to introduce a new leadership on the national arena whose first qualification was unquestioned loyalty to the British Crown. The first session of the Congress was held in Bombay in 1885. The second was in Calcutta and the third in Madras. At every one of these sessions the Congress delegates were felicitated by the respective English Governors. In fact, it was even decided, in the first instance, that the Bombay Governor himself should preside over the first Congress session. But the idea was subsequently abandoned as that would have been too blatant an exposure of their designs. W. C. Bonnerjee was then inducted as the President at the last moment. As was expected, the presidential address overflowed with encomiums for 'the many and varied benefits accruing to the country from the benign rule of the British.' The session commenced with prayers for the

long life and health of the Queen of England. The second President of the Congress, Dadabhai Naoroji, exclaimed with warmth and pride that they were laying the second foundation-stone for the British Empire. Surendranath Banerjea, presiding over the 1895 session, prayed that the British Empire might last for ever, and again in 1902, he stated that the highest aspiration of Indians was that they be admitted into the great confederacy of self-governing states of which England was the august mother.

It must be remembered that stalwarts like Dadabhai Naoroji and Surendranath Banerjea were among the tallest nationalists of the day with unsurpassed qualities of head and heart. But that even such nationalist giants could not get over the spell of the beneficence of the British rule speaks of the extent to which English education had cast its spell.

However, as days passed, the character of the Congress began undergoing a remarkable transformation. It was the irrepressible spirit of liberty dormant in the nation's psyche which had wrought that miracle of converting an instrument intended to fasten the foreign bondage into a formidable weapon for breaking the same. And this metamorphosis of the Congress became crystallised under the dynamic leadership of Tilak and Gandhiji. From being a platform of arm-chair politicians the Congress now became a movement of the masses, a powerful forum for people's protests, non-co-operation and finally, Satyagraha. In June 1906, Tilak, while giving the call for boycott of foreign goods, thundered that the days of prayers, petitions and protests were over.

This, in a nutshell, is how the British played their cards vis-a-vis the Hindus in that great triangular tussle. And they stuck to this policy till the very end. The policy of dampening the spirit of self-confidence and self-esteem among the Hindus, sowing seeds of ill-will and dissension among their diverse sections through various dubious ways, depriving them of their legitimate share of power and boosting Muslim power and influence whenever any new constitutional changes were introduced – all these became the recurring keynote of their policy.

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3

Abetting Muslim Separatism

THE STRATEGY evolved by the British vis-a-vis the Muslims was based on a clear appraisal of the Muslims' psyche in India as it had developed over the past couple of centuries.

The Muslim Psyche

In the wake of the collapse of the military and political power of Islam in Bharat, it was Shah Walilullah Dehlavi (1703–1762) who rose to launch the fanatically revivalist Wahabi movement among the Muslims here. Wahabism upheld the puritanic traditions prevailing during the times of the Prophet and the first four Khalifas. He assigned to *jehad* a dynamic role "like a surgical operation on a pestering sore" for establishing a universal Khalifa, whose effective authority would hold down various rulers of the decadent societies all over the world. In line with this thinking, he invited Ahmed Shah Abdali of Afghanistan to invade Bharat in order to save the decadent Islamic power and crush the rising Hindu power under the Mahrattas and Jats. Especially, Walilullah bore upon the Muslims the need to keep themselves away from the general stream of Indian life as otherwise the Islamic purity would be corrupted by contact with the Hindus. In addition to a vigorous campaign against the Hindu practices, it was also necessary, he said, for the Muslims to feel themselves as part of the entire Muslim world, so that the springs of their inspiration and ideals could remain centred in Islam. This resulted in the alienation of the Muslim masses from the mainstream of Hindu life here. The process of gradual cultural union of Hindus and Muslims which was going on for some time was thus reversed.

Walilullah also wrote letters to Muslim Nawabs and called upon the general Muslim populace to extend whole-hearted

support to the invading Afghan army. However, Ahmed Shah Abdali, even though he defeated the Hindu forces at Panipat in 1761, returned to Afghanistan. Soon the Hindu forces recovered and Delhi came under the sway of Mahrattas. However, the British regime began encompassing ever widening areas of Bharat. Shah Abdul Aziz (1746–1822), the son of Walilullha, now came forward to declare that India was *Dar-ul-Harb*, i.e., a country at war for the establishment of Islamic sovereignty. He termed the Christian rule of the British as the rule of *kafirs*. A parallel campaign was launched by Haji Shariatullah, the founder of Faraidi movement in Bengal. Shah Abdul Aziz also anointed Syed Ahmed Barelvi (1776–1831), hailing from Arabia, as a military cum political and spiritual leader to carry out the *jehad*. Syed Ahmed undertook a tour in Rohilkhand, Doab, Oudh, Bihar and Bengal for enrolling volunteers and mobilising funds for the establishment of a new Khalifate. By 1830, Syed Ahmed established a government at Peshavar with a formidable Wahabi army of 80,000 soldiers and was duly installed as a Khalifa. Syed Ahmed now directed his *jehad* against the Sikhs.

The British who were only too eager to see the destruction of the Sikh power connived at the Wahabi mobilisation of men, money and weapons from the British territories and their movements towards Afghanistán via Sind or Punjab, to carry on their onslaught on the Sikhs. But the valiant Sikh forces under Ranjit Singh cut the Wahabi forces into pieces and Syed Ahmed himself was put to the sword in 1831 at the Balakot battle.

However, the movement did not fizzle out even after this deadly blow; it now opened up new fronts against the British. The latter were now trapped in the whirlwind sown by themselves. William Hunter writes: "Upon our annexation of the Punjab the fanatic fury, which had formerly spent itself upon the Sikhs, was transfered to their successors. Hindus and English were alike infidels in the eyes of the Sittana Host, and as such were to be exterminated by the sword. The disorders as which we had connived at, or at least viewed with indifference, upon the Sikh frontier, now descended as a bitter inheritance to ourselves. Their followers were found preaching sedition in different parts of the country so far apart as Rajshahi in Bengal, Patna in Bihar and the Punjab frontier. Throughout the whole

period the fanatics kept the border tribes in a state of chronic hostility to the British Power."[1] Hunter says that between 1850 and 1863 they sent 36 distinct expeditions aggregating 60,000 regular troops besides irregulars and police.

The Wahabi episode tellingly illustrates the divide-and-rule policy of the British. So long as the Sikhs were posing a challenge to the British in the Punjab and the Northwest, they encouraged the fanatic Muslim *jehadis* against them. Once the Sikhs had been subbued and the areas conquered, the *jehadis* were declared rebels and crushed.

British Move to Neutralise Muslim Antagonism

The Wahabi movement conveyed pointedly to the British the strength of Muslim fanaticism and its capacity for rousing their mass frenzy. For a time, the British went to the extent of looking upon the Muslims as their chief adversaries. Lord Ellenborough, the Governor General, wrote in 1843 to the Duke of Willingdon that the Muhammedan race was basically hostile to the British and that their policy should be one of reconciliation with the Hindus. At the same time the British began devising plans to diffuse the Muslim religious hatred and imparting to it a new direction to suit their own imperial interests.

W. W. Hunter wrote the book *The Indian Mussalmans* expressly to analyse the root cause underlying the Muslim hostility to the British rule and how best they (the British) could assuage them and win over their loyalty. He was especially at pains to highlight their grave religious apprehensions and show how to allay them. Also, the Muslim commitment to the injunctions of Koran coming in direct conflict with their loyalty to any non-Islamic rule needed to be suitably interpreted to eliminate its anti-British sting. The effectiveness of Hunter lay chiefly in his apparently sympathetic tone in appreciating the Muslim susceptibilities and the genuineness of many of their grievances.

Hunter also pointed out where they (the British) had gone wrong in the past and what new postures they had to adopt in the future. In line with this approach, British officers urged eminent Islamic authorities to issue suitable directions so as to convince the devout Muslims that loyalty to the Christian rule of the British was in no way repugnant to the Koranic injunctions.

In addition to guaranteeing non-interference in the religious practices of the Muslims, the British initiated one more measure to hook the *maulvis* on to their loyalistic line. The British, who had confiscated the lands of the Hindu zamindars participating in the 1857 revolt, distributed the same as gifts to those Muslims who stood by the British during that trying period. It was this vested landed interert among the Muslim aristocracy, especially in Oudh and parts of U. P. and Bihar, which succeeded in persuading the *maulvis* to issue *fatwas* with a view to counteracting the previous *fatwas* calling for the establishment of *Dar-ul-Islam*. The *fatwas* issued by the heads of the three prominent Mussalman sects of Mecca declared that the Mussalmans under the Christian rule of the British were assured of protection and liberty of Islamic observances and as such it was not *Dar-ul-Harb* and did not warrant *jehad* against it.

The traumatic experience of the 1857 revolt had carried the same crucial lessons for the British. The Hindu and Muslim forces, especially the Muslim religious leaders among the latter, had joined hands in that fierce bid to oust the British. The British were now fully convinced that the Muslim threat to their empire needed to be met with a two-pronged strategy : of suppressing with an iron hand wherever their insurgency reared its head, and of neutralising the ire of their religious fanaticism against their (British) rule. The British also realised the peril to their Indian empire if the combined hostility of Hindus and Muslims was allowed to continue against them. They, therefore, soon changed their strategy to one of weaning the Muslims away from, and setting them against, the Hindus.

With what a cold and calculating spirit this policy was being pursued can be seen in the words of Lord Hamilton in a letter he wrote to Viceroy Elgin in 1897: "I am sorry to hear of the increasing friction between Hindus and Muhammedans in the N.W.F.P. and the Punjab. One hardly knows what to wish for; unity of ideas and action would be very dangerous politically, divergence of ideas and collision are administratively troublesome. Of the two the latter is the least risky, though it throws anxiety and responsibility upon those on the spot where the friction exists."[2]

The British resorted to prodding the Muslims to what their separatist ambitions and keep them away from the combined

front of national resistance. They roused, towards that end, the Muslims' latent historical memories : that they were the descendants of the great Moghul Emperors who once ruled over Bharatvarsha and as such belonged to the ruling classes ; the Hindus were slaves under them, *kafirs* ; it was beneath Muslims' dignity to mingle and make common cause with the Hindus ; and so on.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's Role

In this effort of theirs, luck smiled upon them in the form of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, who sincerely believed in the beneficence of the British rule and was a loyal servant of the British empire during the 1857 upheaval. Sir Syed was convinced that the redemption of Indian Muslims lay in their getting trained in English education and Western mode of civilisation. In fact he was so much enamoured of the white man's ways that Indians were in his eyes 'dirty animals' and 'imbecile brutes' compared with the former.

Sri Syed tried to wean the Muslims away from *ulemas* and bring them into the mainstream of British culture through schools, translation of English books to Urdu, etc. He also brought out a commentary of his own on the Bible just to show that the message of Christ was not corrupted and remained true to the original revelation. Christians and Muslims, he said, belonged to the same religious stock of the Old Testament.

Sir Syed's views on Indian nationalism which he expressed in 1884 were in strange contract to his future role as a champion of Muslim separatism. In his reply to the felicitation at the Indian Association, Lahore, on 3rd February 1884, he said : "We normally associate the word 'nation' with 'Hindus' and 'Mussalmans." In my opinion, the concept of nation is not to be linked with one's religious beliefs, because all of us, whether Hindus or Mussalmans, have grown in this soil, enjoy common points of sustenance and prosperity and share common rights. This, verily, is the basis for both these our sections in Hindusthan to come together under the common name Hindu Nation. The term Hindu should not be identified with the Hindu community alone. All sections – whether they be Mussalman or Christian – are Hindu. I am therefore sorry that while you have used the word Hindu for yourselves, you have not called me by that name."

Sir Syed emphasised the same ideas in a speech at Gurudaspur in 1885 :

"From the oldest times the world 'Nation' is applied to the inhabitants of one country, though they differ in some peculiarities which are characteristic of their own. Hindu and Muhammedan brethren, do you people have any country other than Hindusthan? Remember that the words 'Hindus' and 'Muhammedans' are only meant for religious distinctions, otherwise all persons whether Hindu, Muhammedan or Christian, who reside in this country belong to one and the same nation...they must each and all unite for the good of the country which is common to all."[3]

On another occasion he made a poetic comparison of Hindus and Mussalmans to the two beautiful eyes of a newly wedded bride. "If the two exist in concord the bride will remain resplendent, while if they see in different directions, she is bound to become squinted and even partially blind."[4]

However, these apparently nationalist ideas were only intended for the consumption of Hindus, according to M.R.A. Baig "As is well-known, he (Sir Syed) secured donations for Aligarh from Hindus of his own feudal class. When convassing for their support he expressed such exemplary sentiments as that Hindus and Muslims were the 'two eyes of the beautiful Indian bride.' But when addressing exclusively Muslim, audiences, especially political meetings, he was militant enough to threaten civil war."[5]

The separatist Muslim strain in Sir Syed took a more aggressive turn after the induction of Theodore Beck in 1883 as the principal of the Aligarh College. In a very short period Beck succeeded in becoming the 'friend, philosopher and guide' to Sir Syed. His was the secret hand moving behind the curtain which give the Aligarh movement a vicious anti-Hindu and anti-Congress turn. The first thing Beck did in order to carry out his design, was to assume the editorial control of *Institute Gazette*–the official organ of the Aligarh College. Issue after issue of that *Gazette* therafter began pouring venom against the Hindus in general and the Congress in particular. His strategy was clear: it was to keep the Muslims away from the Hindus and the Congress. He called upon the Muslims to make common cause with the British in order to oppose the Congress

demands. And all this he carried on with Sir Syed remaining as the nominal editor of the *Gazette*.

In these machinations of Beck, Governor General Dufferin too joined hands. His long interview with Sir Syed had converted the latter into a confirmed opponent of all nationalist and democratic forces in the country in general and the Congress in particular.

Bengalis, who were then in the vanguard of national resurgence, became the special target of Beck's vituperations. Till then Sir Syed himself was an ardent admirer of Bengalis and had described them as 'the head and crown of all communities in India.' It was because of them, he had felt, that there had been a great advance in the field of education and ideas of freedom and patriotism had spread in the country. But now, because of Beck's viruent attacks on the Bengalis and their movements, the Bengali papers were put on a wrong scent. They started looking upon Sir Syed as their opponent – he being the editor of that paper – and therefore commenced counter-attacking him. It was thus that a bitter cleavage was brought about between those who were at one time so intimate in their ideas and so ardent in their mutual admiration.

Divisive Hand of British Bureaucrats

In fact, whatever policies Sir Syed had previously initiated in tune with his idea of a single nationhood, were systematically torpedoed by Beck. Sir Syed had advised the Muslims to consider the friendship of Hindus as far more valuable than their practice of slaughtering the cow. He warned them of the utter stupidity of inviting the Hindu wrath on that score and called upon them to give up cow-slaughter. Beck, However, reversed this policy and openly instigated the Muslims to uphold sacrificing the cow as their religious right.

The speech which Sir Syed delivered at Lucknow in 1888 shows how he had by that time become a confirmed separatiest : "I do not understand what the words National Congress mean. Is it supposed that the different castes and creeds living in India belong to one nation or can become a nation and their name and aspirations be one and the same? I object to every Congress in any shape or form whatever which regards India as one nation." He added that "in case the British left, the

Hindus and the Muslims could not 'share power' because it is necessary that one of them should conquer the other."

When, in 1885, the Congress was started, Beck immediately sensed the threat it might pose in course of time to the Empire. And very soon, in 1888, he took the initiative to found the "United Indian Patriotic Association" which was to serve as a counterblast to the Congress and keep the intelligentsia on the side of the British. A branch of this Association was opened in England also. After a time, Beck pioneered one more association, the "Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association," restricting its membership to only Muslims and Europeans. The objects of the Association were twofold: to strengthen the hands of the British rulers and to protect and uphold the rights of Muslims.

In 1889, Charles Bradlaugh piloted a bill in the British Parliament seeking to introduce an element of democracy in Bharat. Again Beck started setting up Muslims against that measure. Even as early as 1883, Beck, before leaving England for India to join the Aligarh College, had set his face against any kind of parliamentary system for India. He had vehemently argued, "The parliamentary system in India is most unsuited and the experiment would prove futile if the representative institution is introduced. The Muslims will be under the majority opinion of the Hindus, a thing which will be highly resented by Muslims, and which, I am sure, they will not accept quietly."[6]

Now in the face of Bradlaugh's Bill, Beck began organising massive Muslims' protest against it. He drafted a memorandum to be submitted to the British Parliament and sent batches of Aligarh students to various towns on a signature campaign. And he himself accompanied a batch to Delhi. Standing before the Jumma Masjid on a Friday, the students, on the advice of Beck, told the prospective signatories – who hardly understood a word of that English memorandum – that it was a petition to the Government to uphold the right of Muslims to cow-slaughter and oppose the anti-cow-slaughter demand of Hindus. And this was how 20,735 signatures were obtained on that petition. Such were the freudulent means adopted by Beck to perpetuate his imperialistic designs. And he did succeed in nullifying the intent of the Bill. Everything, they say, is fair in

love and war. And it is such persons as Beck who added one more word – "and politics" to that adage !

The encomium paid by Sir John Strachey to the memory of Beck on his demise in 1899 shows how highly the British imperialists prized his services: "An Englishman who was engaged in empire-building activities in a far-off land has passed away. He died like a soldier at the post of his duty. The Muslims are a suspicious people. They opposed Mr. Beck in the beginning suspecting him to be a British spy, but his sincerity and selflessness soon succeeded in his gaining their confidence."[7]

Morrison who succeeded Beck at the Aligarh College also faithfully followed in the footprints of his predecessor. Archibald, who came after Morrison in 1905, too, contributed his 'valuable' share to the 'Aligarh tradition' set up by Beck and Morrison in conjunction with Sir Syed.

The basic tenets which Sir Syed formulated for the Aligarh Movement had the keynote that not one, but two nations, with distinct social, political, religious and historical traditions existed in Bharat. The other tenets were :

The grant of representative institutions based on democratic principles, and appointment to high offices by open competitive examinations in India, would be detrimental to the interests of the Muslims; they would be subject to Hindu domination which is far worse than British rule.

Consequently, the Muslims should regard the paramountcy of the British as the chief safeguard of their interests, and keep themselves aloof from political agitations against the Government.

As the Muslim interests are quite safe in the hands of the British, the Muslims should confine their attention to cultural development, and avoid politics except in so far as it is necessary to counter-balance the mischief of Hindu political agitators.[8]

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4

Partition of Bengal

MORE THAN any other province, Bengal, as we have already observed, had become the beehive of a galaxy of revolutionaries and nationalist and social leaders of all-India fame. It also furnished the nucleus for a great spiritual and cultural upsurge having its profound impact on the entire national scene. The Viceroy, Lord Curzon, felt alarmed that if the Bengal 'fire' was not extinguished soon, it would envelop the entire country and their imperialistic hold would be seriously threatened. He therefore decided to eleminate this looming threat by dividing Bengal and forming a separate Muslim-dominated East Bengal.

Attempt to Break Patriotic Spirit

The unwieldy Bengal province at that time included, in addition to the whole of Bengal, the present areas of Assam, Bihar and Orissa. In fact, from the administrative point of view, these three areas needed to be formed into separate provinces However, Chittagong, Dacca, Mymensingh and Tipperah Hill regions of Bengal were attached to Assam and a new East Bengal province formed, A simultaneous proposal to create a separate province of Bihar and attaching Orissa to Central Provinces was turned down.

The imperialist motive behind this move was exposed by an English officer, Sir Henry Cotton, himself : "The object of the measure was to shatter the unity and to disintegrate the feelings of solidarity which are established in the province. It was no administrative reason that lay at the root of this scheme. It was part and parcel of Lord Curzon's policy to enfeeble the growing power and to destroy the political tendencies of a patriotic spirit."[1]

The Statesman, the English-owned daily from Calcutta, also laid bare the true colour of the partition plan when it justified the measure editorially by asserting that it was intended

"to foster in Eastern Bengal the growth of Mohammedan power which, it is hoped, will have the effect of keeping in check the rapidly growing strength of the Hindu community."[2]

In his letter to Brodrick in 1904, Curzon wrote : "If we are weak enough to yield to their clamour now, we shall not be able to dismember or reduce Bengal again; and you will be cementing and solidifying, on the eastern flank of India, a force almost formidable, and certain to be a source of increasing trouble in the future."[3]

Unprecedented Patriotic Upsurge

The tremendous outburst of protests and resistance which greeted the partition plan all over Bengal was something which the British had not probably foreseen. The Muslims too had spontaneously joined hands with the Hindus in denouncing the British conspiracy. Lord Curzon and Andrew Fraser lost no time in preparing secret plans to wean the Muslims away from the Hindus through various governmental favours. The Nawab of Dacca, Salimulla Khan, who had condemned the partition as a 'devilish bargain', was won over by a handsome loan of one lakh pounds at a nominal rate of interest.

A special meeting was called at Dacca where Curzon announced that "Eastern Bengal would be a Muslim Province." Curzon said:

"Will any one here pretend that Dacca is anything but a shadow of its former self? The proposed scheme of partition would make Dacca the centre and possibly the capital of a new and self-sufficing province which must give to the people of these districts by reason of their numerical strength and their superior culture the preponderating voice in the province so created, which would invest the Mohammedans in Eastern Bengal with a unity which they have not enjoyed since the days of the old Mussalman Viceroys and Kings, and which would go far to revive the traditions which the historical students assure us once attached to the kingdom of Eastern Bengal."[4]

Unfortunately, quite a few Muslims fell into the trap. Their mind was set aflame with the ambition and zeal of converting East Bengal into a *Dar-ul-Islam*. A call for *jehad* was given. Attacks on Hindus, molestation of Hindu women,

desecration of Hindu temples and destruction of Hindu properties – all these burst forth in full fury with the English officers, and even the magistrates, acting as its abettors.

However, the anti-partition upsurge was powerful enough to keep quite a sizable section of Muslims within its fold and opposed to the government's policy. Nawab Salimulla Khan's own brother Nawab Zada Khwaja Atikulla came on the Congress platform in 1906 and declared: "I may tell you at once that it is not correct that the Mussalmans of Eastern Bengal are in favour of the partition of Bengal. The real fact is that it is only a few leading Mohammedans who for their own purpose supported the measure."[5]

In a book written after his visit to India at the close of the decade, Ramsay Macdonald says, "The partition was not merely a blunder ; it was an indictable offence. ... By a division, which neither administrative convenience, nor historical tradition, nor ordinary sagacity could justify, he (Lord Curzon) divided the Bengali-speaking people. Moreover, the partition was accompanied by a series of administrative and judicial acts which definitely ranged the government against the Hindu, and taught him that our administration declined to do justice to him. Mohammedans proclaiming strike from the housetops were hardly cautioned; Hindu whispering their grievances were treated as criminals." He also significantly adds, "It is of the greatest importance to note that the date afterwards given in the Alipore bomb trials as that when the murderous conspiracy commenced was the day when Lord Curzon did his worst act in India by partitioning Bengal."[6]

Lord Minto personally told Surendranath Benerjea : "If my country was divided in the way your province has been, I should feel just as you do." Morley too was convinced that the partition was unjust and uncalled for. He denounced it in the House of Commons as "a measure which went wholly and decisively against the wishes of the majority of the people concerned," but was not prepared to remedy the wrong on the ground that it had become a "settled fact." Could hypocrisy go any further ?

The people of Bengal accepted the gauntlet thrown by the British imperialists and declared that they would see to it that the 'settled fact' became 'unsettled.'

The Bengalis resolved to observe October 16, 1905, the day of partition, as *Rakshabandhan* day. Over 50,000 people took a holy dip in the Ganga and assembled at Barisal for the ceremonious pledge. Their roar of *Vende Mataram* filled the skies. Rabindranath Tagore administered the vow of achieving united Bengal. That was, in the eyes of the British, blatant treason. The Lieutenant Governor of the newly formed province, Sir Bampfylde Fuller, at once moved the army units to put out the flame. Fuller was an unabashed appeaser of Muslims who had once remarked that Muslims and Hindus were like his two queens of the Indian legends, the first being the *suo* (favoured) and the second the *duo* (neglected). The orgy of atrocities let loose on the Hindus and the rape of their womenfolk by the soldiers only added fuel to the fire of Bengali resistance. The roar of *Vande Mataram* rapidly crossed the Bengal borders and became the battle-cry of the entire nation. The trio of 'Lal, Bal and Pal', who spearheaded the countrywide movement coupled with the bomb attacks on English officers by the revolutionaries, became a nightmare to the British. The Emperor of England, George V, hurried to Delhi for a special durbar on December 12, 1911, and announced that the Bengal partition had been annulled. This marked the first resounding victory of the forces of nationalism against the divisive tactics of the British Imperialists.

After the 1857 Revolt, this stirring episode became perhaps the most effective and successful endeavour at national self-assertion, leaving a remarkable impact on the national mind.

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5

Sowing Seeds of 'Two Nation Theory'

(1) Separate Electorates for Muslims

LORD CURZON retired in November 1905 and Lord Minto succeeded him as the new Viceroy. Minto very soon sensed the rebellious mood pervading the country. In a letter to Morley he says : "As to Congress ... we must recognize them and be friends with the best of them, yet I am afraid there is much that is absolutely disloyal in the movement and that there is danger for the future ... I have been thinking a good deal lately of a possible counterpoise to Congress aims."[1]

Morley responded in the same strain : "Everybody warns us that a new spirit is growing and spreading over India : Lawrence, Chirol, Sydney Low, all sing the same song : 'You cannot go on governing in the same spirit. You have got to deal with the Congress Party and Congress principles, whatever you may think of them. Be sure that before long the Mohammedans will throw in their lot with the Congressmen against you."[2]

In 1906, Viceroy Minto received reports from Governors of different provinces to the effect that tension between Hindus and Muslims had considerably lessened, Minto, in an unhappy and warning tone, wrote to Morley that caste and religious differences between Hindus and Muslims were weakening and even disappearing.

The British now became busy finding new ways and means of counteracting the growing influence of the Congress and pulling back the Muslims from being swept away along the nationalist current. By 1905–6 discussions for the ensuing constitutional changes for Bharat had begun. Archibald decided to exploit that occasion to take a big step forward in the Aligarh

style. In a letter addressed to the Secretary of the Aligarh College, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, he suggested a move : "Colonel Dunlop Simith (Private Secretary to the Viceroy) now writes to me that the Viceroy is prepared to receive the deputation of Mussalmans and intimates me that a formal petition be submitted for it. In this connection the following matters require consideration..."[3] Archibald then details the procedure to be followed, who the members of the deputation should be, what should be the points to be urged and so on, and finally concludes :

"But in all these matters I want to remain behind the screen and this move should come from you. You are aware how anxious I am for the good of the Mussalmans and I would, therefore, render all help with the greatest pleasure. I can prepare and draft the address for you...."[4]

Farce of the Aga Khan's Deputation

Accordingly, a Muslim deputation under the leadership of His Highness the Aga Khan waited on Viceroy Lord Minto, at Simila on 1st October 1906. The selection of the Aga Khan as the leader of the deputation was significant. He was the forty-eighth in lineage of Shia Imams, whose grandfather had rendered whole-hearted support to the British in subduing the Amirs of Sind. In recognition of Aga Khan's services, the British had conferred on him the title 'His Highness' and awarded a pension. His grandson, the then Aga Khan, had also remained true to that 'glorious legacy.' In his 'Memoirs' he noted : "In April 1916, His Majesty accorded me an honour of very special significance. He sanctioned the grant to me of a salute of eleven guns and the rank and precedence of a first class ruling Prince of the Bombay Presidency."[5] The *Times* of London commented editorially how well the honour was deserved.

Such was the gentleman who was anointed as the supreme representative of the Indian Muslims.

The main demands put forth by the Aga Khan deputation to the Viceroy were two. First : "The position accorded to the Mohammedan community in any kind of representation,... should be commensurate, *nor merely with their numerical strength, but also with their political importance* and the value of the contribution which they make to the defence of

the Empire, and ... the position which they occupied in India a little more than a hundred years ago and of which the traditions have naturally not faded from their minds."[6] (Emphasis ours)

The claim of 'political importance' of Muslims was based on factors such as 'they owned a large proportion of landed property and held a prominent position in the public service and the Indian Army and their geographical disposition which made them the gate-keepers of Bharat.'

Secondly : since the methods of nomination and election prevaling till then had failed to give the Muslims proper and adequate representation, they should be given the right of sending their own representatives through *separate communal electorates*. "Because," the deputation argued, "the representative institution of the European type would place their national interest at the mercy of an unsympathetic majority."

Its other demands were : Greater Muslim representation in all grades of Government services including the Judiciary, Municipal and District Boards, Senates and Sindicates of Universities ; Mohammedan representatives in the Viceroy's Imperial Legislative Council to be such as to be never in an ineffective minority; one or more Muslims to be included in the Viceroy's Executive Council; assistance of the Government in founding a separate Muslim University; abolition of competitive examinations for the recruitment of services; communal electorate for Municipalities, and separate Muslim electoral colleges for election to Legislative Councils.

The way Lord Minto responded to these demands was very significant. In a written reply, he upheld all the contentions of the deputation and even substantiated them with his own arguments. He said : "...Your address, as I understand it, is a claim that, in any system of representation,...the Mohammedan community should be represented as a community. You point out that in many cases electoral bodies, as now contituted, cannot be expected to return a Mohammedan candidate, and that if by chance they did so, it could only be at the sacrifice of such candidates' views to those of a majority opposed to his own community, whom he would in no way represent, I am entirely in accord with you...I am as firmly convinced as I believe you to be, that any electoral representation in India would be doomed to mischievous failure which aimed at granting

a personal enfranchisement, regardless of the beliefs and traditions of the communities composing the population of this continent."[7]

Lady Minto had previously remarked that this deputation had been "engineered" by Nawab Mohisin-ul-Mulk. She now wrote in her journal :

"This has been a very eventful day : as some one said to me, 'an epoch in Indian History,' We are aware of the felling of unrest that exists throughout India, and the dissatisfaction that prevails amongst people of all classes and creeds. The Mohammedan population which number 62 millions, who have always been intensely loyal, resent their not having proper representation and consider themselves slighted in many ways, preference having been given to the Hindus. The agitators have been most anxious to foster this feeling and have naturally done their utmost to secure the co-operation of this vast community. The younger generation were wavering, inclined to throw in their lot with advanced agitators of the Congress, and a howl went up that the loyal Mohammedans were not to be supported, and that the agitators were to obtain their demands through agitation."[8]

After this preamble she has given a graphic eye-witness account of the deputation's meeting with the Viceroy and the latter's reply. In the same journal Lady Minto writes : "This evening I have received the following letter from an official : 'I must send Your Excellency a line to say that a very very big thing has happened today: a work of statesmanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year. It is nothing less than the pulling back of 62 millions of people from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition."[9]

That this was the general tenor of the British reaction was plain enough. Lord John Morley, Secretary of State, wrote to Minto on 26 October : "All that you tell me of your Mohammedans is full of interest, ... The whole thing has been as good as it could be, and it stamps your position and personal authority decisively. Among other good effects of your deliverance is this, that it has completely deranged the plan and tactics of the critical faction here, that is to say, it has prevented them from any longer representing the Indian Government

as the ordinary case of bureaucracy versus the people."[10]

Buchan, Lord Minto's biographer, described Minto's reply to Aga Khan's deputation as 'a Charter of Islamic Rights.'

Referring to the articles appearing in *Times*, London, and other papers, extolling the wisdom of the Deputation, Maulvi Tufail Ahmed wrote: "It appears from these articles how the English press looked upon Indians being one nation with a sense of shock and heart-burning and how pleased they were to see it broken into pieces and how proud they felt in setting the Indians against one another on the basis of religion and of creating lasting hostility between them."[11] *Amrit Bazaar Patrika* of Calcutta made the sarcastic and biting comment that the so-called All-India Muslim Deputation was just a farce enacted by interested British officials and was neither all-India, nor all-Muslim, nor even a deputation.

Seeds of Separatism Sown

This was how the pernicious seed of Muslim separatism in the form of separate electorates was sown in Indian politics which was to 'affect Indian history for many a long year.'

Separate electorate implied the formation of certain constituencies where only the Muslim electorate could vote for Muslim candidates. The rest could vote only in the general constituencies. W. C. Smith pointed out how this vicious system distorted the course of Muslim politics: "The separate electorates compelled the Muslims to vote communally, think communally, listen only to communal election speeches, judge the delegates communally, look for constitutional and other reforms only in terms of more relative communal power, and express their grievances communally."[12] This arrangement naturally gave a big impetus to a political movement among Muslims inspired by a separatist religious consciousness. It threw up a class of communal Muslim leaders who would vie with one another in inciting and catering to the fanatic religious feelings of their co-religionists. This, in other words, was a device for building up a fiercely anti-Hindu and anti-national leadership to counterblast the nationalist Congress leadership. From here on begins the story of how the poisonous seed of a two-nation theory was nurtured by both British imperialists and Muslim communalists.

Aga Khan wrote in his Memoirs : " ... Lord Minto's acceptance of our demands was the foundation of all future constitutional proposals made for India by successive British Governments, and the final, inevitable consequence was the partition of India and the emergence of Pakistan."[13]

Lionel Curtis, a leading member of 'English Round Table Group' and a champion of British imperialism, censured the British for having committed a betrayal of trust by this move of separate electorates. He prophesied : "Muslims would learn to depend on an artificial protection instead of facing the real source of their weakness, their relative backwardness in education. It is like keeping in irons a weak but healthy limb which only needs exercise to recover its strength. I believe that if this principle is perpetuated we shall have saddled India with a new system of caste which will eat every year more deeply into her life. In conceding the establishing of communal representation we have, I hold, been false to that trust. The system has eaten into the life of this people so deeply that already it is not possible to abolish at one stroke, what might have been refused a few years ago."[14]

Ramsay Macdonald who subsequently became the Prime Minister of Britain had made caustic comments on the Aga Khan deputation saying that the Muslim leaders had been "inspired by certain Anglo-Indian officials who pulled wires of Simla and in London and of malice aforethought sowed discord between the Hindus and the Mohammedan communities by showing the latter special favours."

In his book on India Ramsay Macdonald has further revealed :

"Some of the far-seeing members of the Mohammedan community are already beginning to feel that they have made a mistake. Several spoke to me with bitterness about the way certain of their leaders had consented to play a game planned for them by Anglo-Indian officials, whilst in the minds of others who were still in favour of what had been done, a knowledge was dawning that there were dangers ahead and that they might have been better protected if they had not asked for so much. Few of them could be induced to defend the privileges given to Mohammedans in Eastern Bengal and the Punjab where they are actually in a majority."[15]

(2) Founding of Muslim League

However, the British-Muslim axis began devising newer and newer schemes towards meeting their ends. In their meeting with Lord Minto the Muslim leaders had been rewarded with more than what they had ever hoped for. They now felt that the formation of a permanent political body with the blessings of the British would yield them higher and yet higher dividends in future. Accordingly, a conference of prominent Muslims was held at Dacca under the leadership of Nawab Salimullah Khan and the All-India Muslim League was formed on 30 December 1906, with Aga Khan as its permanent president. The declared aims and objectives of the League were too patent to conceal the combined British and Muslim hand behind the move. They were :

"(1) to promote among the Indian Muslims feelings of loyalty towards the British Government, and to remove any misconception that might arise as to the intentions of the Government with regard to any of its measures : (2) to protect the political and other rights of the Indian Muslims and to place their needs and aspirations before the Government in temperate language ; (3) so far as possible, without prejudice to the objects mentioned under paras (1) and (2), to promote friendly feelings between Muslims and other communities of India."[16]

Lurid signs were not wanting even at the time of the birth of the League which foreshadowed the shape of things to come. The Red Pamphlet *Lal Istahar* distributed to the delegates on that occasion carried this appeal :

"Ye Mussalmans, arise, awake ! Do not read in the same schools with Hindus. Do not buy anything from a Hindu shop. Do not touch any article manufactured by Hindu hands. Do not give any employment to a Hindu. Do not accept any degrading office under a Hindu. You are ignorant, but if you acquire knowledge you can at once send all Hindus to *jehannum* (hell). You form the majority of the population of this province. The Hindu has no wealth of his own and has made himself rich only by despoiling you of your wealth. If you become sufficiently enlightened, then the Hindus will starve and soon become Mohammedans."[17]

Such and other outrageous statements in that Red Pamphlet provided fuel to the fanatic fire of Muslims. Very soon, on 4 March 1907, riots broke out in Comilla (now in Bangladesh)– incited by the henchmen of Nawab Salimullah. Assault, murder, looting, rape, destruction of properties and arson 'burst out in full fury. H. W. Nevinson, eye-witness and correspondent for *Manchester Guardian*, writer : ".. Lives were lost, temples desecrated, images broken, shops plundered and many Hindu widows carried off... women spent nights hidden in tanks and the crime known as 'group rape' increased..."[18]

The Muslim League at its annual session of 1908 faithfully toed the Aga Khan – Minto line and demanded communal representation in local bodies, a higher representation in Government services and such other special privileges for Muslims. It also denounced the Congress resolution against the partition of Bengal. The League followed up its resolution by a virulent propaganda offensive as well. A branch of the Muslim League was founded in London which in course of time proved to be a powerful lobby working hand in glove with the British imperialists for securing special and higher representation and reservation for the Muslims.

The annulment of Bengal partition in 1911 naturally came as an unexpected blow to the League separatists. Nawab Salimullah felt so much humiliated and frustrated that he bade good-bye to politics itself and retired to a private life.

It is a fact that in those days a few Muslim intellectuals were far from being votaries of separatism. Aga Khan in his Memoirs had made a revealing observation : "Who then was our doughtiest opponent in 1906? A distinguished Muslim barrister in Bombay, with a large and prosperous practice: Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah ... We had always been on friendly terms, but at this juncture he came out in bitter hostility towards all that I and my friends had done and were trying to do.... he said that our principle of separate electorates was dividing the nation against itself, and for nearly a quarter of a century he remained our most inflexible critic and opponent."[19]

The Muslim League too was anything but a mass movement. Choudhry Khaliquzzaman, a top League leader of U.P., writes : "It (Muslim League) was dominated by the titled gentry, Nawabs, landlords and *jee huzoors* who were generally well-

meaning gentlemen but wanted to serve the Muslim cause only so for as it did not affect their position either socially or in Government quarters. Since its very birth in 1906, the Muslim League's activities had always been confined to indoor political shows."[20]

It was natural that the Muslim League, so severely restricted to a small cringing, aristocratic class, had neither any idea nor plan of playing a big role in the national affairs of the country.

It was in such a situation that Congress was called upon to formulate its strategy towards the Muslims in general and the League in particular.

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6

A Nation Bestirred

THE NEW constitutional changes incorporating Minto's assurances to the Muslims and brought into force in 1909 came to be known as Morley-Minto Reforms. In addition to granting Muslims separate electorates and weightage in representation, gross discrimination was practised against the Hindus in matters of formation of electoral groups and qualifications of electors with respect to the annual income, income for income-tax purposes, the educational qualifications and duration of their holding the diplomas or degrees, etc.

The Reforms did not stop at laying the political axe to tear apart Muslims and Hindus. It sought to divide the Hindu population from within as well. The Sikhs were denominated as a separate community distinct from Hindus and accorded separate electorates. And this was justified under the pretext that they formed a distinct and important people who supplied a gallanet element to the Indian Army.

The first reaction of Congress to the 1909 Reforms was in tune with the resurgent national mood of the country generated by the anti-Bengal-partition agitation and revolutionary outbursts. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya in his speech in the Imperial Legislative Council had unequivocally denounced the scheme of separated electorates. The Congress, he had affirmed, would never be a party to such a divisive scheme.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale, another veteran of the Congress, also criticised the Reforms in no uncertain terms. Warning against the dangers of representation on the basis of caste or religion, he stated that it was only on the basis of territorial representation that the interests of the common people of a big population could be justly represented. This was the experience he world over. There was no need, he said, for the Government

to uphold the principle of representation on the basis of caste or religion. The dissensions generated among different selfish vested interests had already proved to be a curse to the country.

The 1909 Congress Session registered "its strong sense of disapproval of the creation of separate electorates on the basis of religion." The Congress also stated, "In particular the Regulations have caused widespread dissatisfaction throughout the country by reason of (*a*) the excessive and unfairly preponderant share of representation given to the followers of one particular religion : (*b*) the unjust, invidious, and humiliating distinctions made between the Muslim and the non-Muslim subjects of His Majesty in the matter of elections, the franchise and the qualifications of candidates ; (*c*) the wide, arbitrary, and unreasonable disqualifications and restrictions for candidates seeking election to the councils."

Revolutionaries Quicken the Nation's Pulse

The growing revolutionary activities during this period gave the freedom struggle a new dimension altogether. The terrorist acts of revolutionaries, especially in Bengal, the Punjab, the United Provinces and Bombay Province, found their resounding echo not only throughout Bharat but also abroad. Credit must go to the valiant endeavours of the revolutionaries for carrying the fiery message of freedom to the Indians living in such distant and far-flung lands as England, France, Ireland, America Egypt, Japan, Malaya, Thailand, China, Indonesia and Philippines. With personalities like Pandit Shyamaji Krishnavarma, Madame Cama, Rashbehari Bose, Lala Hardyal, Savarkar and Veerendra Chattopadhyaya endowed with matchless patriotism, vision and courage, as its helmsmen, the movement abroad gained a majesty and sweep all its own.

Those who with their blood were feeding the fires of revolutionary struggle inside the country were legion – Khudiram Bose, Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev, Chandrasekhar Azad, Trilokyanath Chakravarty, Shachindranath Bakshi, Chaphekar brothers, to name only a prominent few. The profound impact of revolutionary martyrdom even abroad can be gauged from the instance of Madanlal Dhingra, who shot Curzon Wylie, Head of the India Office, London, in July 1909 at a club meeting

in London and was sentenced to death. W. S. Blunt has quoted the words of his royal friend, Lyne Stevens. "He (Lyne Stevens) talked about the Dhingra assassination, which seems to have at last convinced his royal friends that there is something wrong about the state of India. People talk about political assassination defeating its own end, but that is nonsense ; it is just the shock needed to convince selfish rulers that selfishness has its limits of imprudence. It is like that other fiction that England never yields to threats. My experience is that when England has her face well slapped she apologises, not before."[1] Blunt further wrote in his Diaries that no Christian martyr ever faced his judges more fearlessly or with greater dignity, and remarked that the day of Dhingra's execution would be regarded as one of martyrdom in India for generations.

The cult of bomb had found its supporters – some overt and some covert – among most of the national stalwarts of the day: for example, Aurobindo Ghose, 'Lal, Bal Pal,' Aswini Kumar Datta, Acharya P. C. Ray, Rabindrnath Tagore and Bankimchandra. Tilak had openly propounded in his paper *Kesari* the Philosophy of the Bomb, paying the price of six years of rigorous imprisonment in the dungeons of Mandalay in the distant Burma.

How severely the British were shaken by the revolutionary rumblings underneath their feet was revealed by the Viceroy Minto himself:

"The European Calcutta population is so unnerved that, if things go wrong, it may be necessary to restore confidence by immediate deportation. I do not like saying this sort of thing at all, but that is how it is."[2]

Dissolving Muslim Separatism : the Right Approach

It would be worth while recalling here how the religious loyalties melted in the blazing patriotic fervour of revolutionaries to form a common national amalgum. Ashfakhulla Khan was a renowned revolutionary condemned to the gallows for his part in the famous Kakori Dacoity on 9 August 1925. We see him uttering these prayers even while awaiting the judgement: "Oh, my adored motherland, I have placed my body and life at your altar. I care little whether I am awarded a life conviction or a death sentence. I still sing thy glories and salute

even with my chained hands. Was it not Lord Sri Krishna who, standing in the midst of battlefield, impressed upon Arjuna that life and death are unreal? May my dear Motherland become free and shine in glory for ever and ever! What matters if I am alive or dead?"[3]

Ram Prasad Bismil, gifted poet and a beloved leader of revolutionaries, was also sent to the gallows along with Ashfakhulla. In his autobiography written in prison he addresses his bosom friend Ashfakhulla:

"You became my honoured and beloved friend and comrade. Everyone who knew me was amazed. I was a devout follower of Arya Samaj and you a devout Muslim. They wondered how we could get on together. In fact, I was accustomed to inviting Muslims to come back to the Hindu fold and I would reside normally in hostels run by the Arya Samaj. But none of these came in your way. My friends were looking at you with suspicion but you stuck steadfast to the chosen path. You would also visit our Arya Samaj hostel; you were so free in mind. When there was a clash between the Hindus and the Muslims some of your co-religionists chided you as a *kafir* for your supporting the cause of Hindu-Muslim amity. You were indeed a Muslim in the truest sense and a patriot of the purest ray serene. You sincerely desired that Muslims should put their shoulders to the wheel along with the Hindus for liberating the Motherland. You studied Hindi in order to assimilate the true spirit of patriotism and you even became well versed in that language. You would also freely use Hindi words at home which suprised one and all. Your one consuming desire was to see that the Muslim youth and your friends and relations were also imbued with the spirit of revolution."[4]

Here was an inspiring example of how the Indian Muslims might, if a proper climate was created, respond to the call of nationalism. The chief test for our national leadership lay exactly in this – their capacity to kindle the spirit of unadulterated patriotism among the Muslims. With this end in view Lokamanya Tilak had already initiated certain popular programmes. Public worship of Ganapati, the popular God of the masses, became in his hands a potent weapon of political education. When the preaching of unadulterated patriotism was frowned

upon as treason, Ganapati came to the 'rescue' and within a short span of two years His worship assumed the form of a popular national festival. Muslims also freely joined the Hindus at many places. *Rast Gaftar*, a bombay weekly, wrote : "This Year's (1896) Ganapati immersion ceremony in Sholapur exceeded in eclat and enthusiasm anything of the kind that was witnessed in preceding years, and the most noticeable feature was that local Mohammedans freely mixed with the Hindus in doing honour to Ganapati'. At Nasik, both Hindus and Muslims carried Ganapati for immersion, the man leading the procession being a Muslim."[5] At both these places the police tried to incite communal animosity but, fortunately, no untoward incident took place.

Shivaji's Birthday Celebration was one more programme organised by Tilak to deliver his message of *Swaraj* to the masses. Here too, Muslims joined with the Hindus to share the deathless inspiration of one of the greatest generals of our past freedom struggle. Kazi Saifuddin of Hyderabad, an admirer of Tilak, addressed several meetings with a mixed audience of Hindus and Muslims and exhorted them to work jointly for the progress of the country and carry forward the *Swadeshi* movement. It was a common sight to see Muslims speaking at Tilak's public meetings vindicating Tilak's stand that Shivaji was as much a hero of Mohammedans as of Hindus.

The Muslim historian Maulvi Abdul Karim, had called upon the Muslims to respect Shivaji as he had abstained from desecrating mosques or showing disrespect to the Quran in the territories conquered by him. This statement of the historian *maulvi* had fortified the Muslims' warmth in paying homage to Shivaji.

However, the British could not stomach this growing fraternity between the Hindus and the Muslims. They began to devise a number of tactics to defeat Tilak's efforts. The refrain of their propaganda offensive against Tilak was that he was a fanatical Hindu leader opposed to Muslims. *The Times of India*, an Anglo-Indian paper, painted Shivaji as a dacoit who had treacherously murdered Afzal Khan, and then went on to criticise Tilak for trying to popularise such an anti-Muslim rebel.'

Valentine Chirol, who had described Tilak as 'the Father of Unrest', also indulged in the same mud-slinging campaign against the latter in his book *Indian Unrest*. He said that Tilak had publicly denounced the Muslims as the inveterate enemies of Hindus, and had founded an anti-cow-slaughter association, only with a view to offending the Muslim sentiments.

A New Breeze Among Muslims

However, all this divisive propaganda did not cut much ice. Those were the days when the national atmosphere was surcharged with the spirit of *Swadeshi* and *Swaraj*. Quite a number of thoughtful Muslims had begun to come out openly against the cry of Muslim separatism.

Moulvi Shibli Naumani was a well-known Islamic scholar and an associate of Sir Syed Ahmed in the Aligarh College for 15 years. Expressing his keen sense of disappointment and sorrow over the tragic transformation of Sir Syed from an ardent nationalist to a fanatic votary of Muslim separatism the Moulvi wrote :

"That lion of a man who, while opposing the Punjab University Bill, shattered every argument advanced by Lord Lytton and pressed in the course of three articles Indian demands in a language unequalled by the Congress ; ... that patriot who hailed the Bengalis as the pride of the country, thanks to whom ideas of freedom and nationalism could find expression in our midst ; – nature meant him to be a leader of all India. But circumstances and his surroundings made him pull the Muslims back from playing their part in the nationalist movement. Why did it happen ? What was it that so suddenly created this reversal ? It is unnecessary to answer these questions now. But surely the time for blindly following the self-same policy is over. The time for independent thinking has arrived."[6]

Some other life-long associates of Sir Syed also had fallen out with him. Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk, the Secretary of the Aligarh College, wrote in 1907 :

"By the closing years of the last century, several of the trustees of Aligarh College had come to feel that Sir Syed's policy needed serious corrections. It was their sense of gratitude

to Sir Syed for his unique services to the community, which prevented them from opposing him openly.

"We felt that we must no longer allow our regard for and personal loyalty to Sir Syed to stand in the way of our declaring our views and speaking out our minds in the interest of the community. Accordingly, I wrote an article for publication. But in the meanwhile, we got the sad news of Sir Syed's death. In the face of the great blow the community had received in his death, the publication of the article was naturally abandoned."[7]

Syed Hassan Imam who presided over the special Congress sessions at Bombay and Calcutta emphasised the principle that every Indian must be Indian first and everything else afterwards. Even as early as 1910, he bitterly protested against the introduction of separate electorates because it created division in classes residing in India. M.A.N. Hydary, during the course of his presidential address at the Muslim Education Conference in Calcutta, emphasised that acceptance of the common heritage of the country was fundamental for Indian Nationalism.

The developments abroad also had stirred anti-British feelings in the Muslim mind here. Nationalist sentiments and aspirations had begun to sweep Muslim countries like Turkey and Persia whose waves reached our shores also. Added to this were certain international moves of the British which struck at the interests of some Muslim States. The Muslims here naturally resented this and set their face against joining hands with the British.

Such was the delicate balance of conflicting forces and pulls prevailing in Bharat by about 1915-16. On one side were the British manoeuvring through measures like the Aligarh movement, the partition of Bengal, the Morley-Minto Reforms, encouragement to Muslim League, etc., to wean the Muslims away from the main national current and keep them firmly on their side. On the other hand were developments like the national upheaval in the wake of Bengal partition and its successful outcome, the inspiring saga of revolutionary heroes, the wholesome transformation of the Congress as a movement of the masses under the dynamic leadership of Tilak, and the strengthening of the voices of reason and nationalism and anti-British mood among the Muslims.

How did the Congress, which was an avowedly nationalist movement, play its cards in such a crucial phase of the freedom struggle? On that was to depend, in main, the future course of national developments in Bharat.

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7

Congress : On the Slope of Appeasement

CONGRESS had been, from its very inception, caught in an ideological trap laid by the British : that the Congress could lay claim to be a national body only if all the religious communities in this land would come together on its platform ; then alone would the British Government consider it as representative of all Indians and look into its demands.

However, nowhere in the world was this strange interpretation of the concept of 'nation' and 'national' accepted or practised. 'Nationalism' was not something to be equated with arithmetical calculations or juxtapositions of certain groups inhabiting the country. It was, essentially, a sentiment, an attitude of thinking and feeling in terms of 'nation' as an organic whole. It is a spirit of total commitment to national interests and national values – a commitment overriding all other personal or parochial interests. In the Indian context, it implied the subordination of one's loyalties to one's caste, sect, religious faith, language, etc., to the supreme call of the country. It also implied an uncompromising will which would brook no compromise or horse-trading with any group which would strike at this basic loyalty.

The Congress, befitting its name of Indian National Congress, had declared itself a representative body of all groups, religious or otherwise, in the country. It was therefore its preeminent duty to stand steadfast by its commitment to the interests and integrity of the nation as a whole and never succumb to the pressure tactics of any particular section of whatever denomination. However, to the nation's misfortune, the Congress was trapped in the coils of the theories of 'composite nation' and 'composite culture' and infected with an inferiority complex that unless all communities came on its platform it could

not become a nationalist organisation. It became nervous at the prospect of being dubbed 'communal' if Hindus alone participated in its activities.

Congress on the Horns of Ideological Dilemma

The main problem before the Congress was how to draw the Muslims into its fold and nullify the British spell over them. Since the British had started pampering the Muslims to keep them on their side, Congress too felt that there was no other go except to tread the same path. It began experimenting in appeasement in various manners, many times even going to a ridicalous extent. Congress met the fare and other travelling expenditures of the Muslim delegates to the Congress sessions, and afforded special amenities and concessions in the sessions also. Surendranath Banerjea has noted: "Our critics regarded the National Congress as a Hindu Congress, and the opposition papers described it as such. We were straining every nerve to secure the co-operation of our Mohammedan fellow-countrymen... We sometimes paid the fares of Mohammedan delegates and offered them other facilities."[1]

Swami Shraddhananda, a great social and religious figure and an eminent leader of the Congress in those days, has given out some interesting details of the 1899 Congress Session at Lucknow:

"Tickets were issued to every Muslim 'Waiz' delegate free of charge. Messing fee of Rs. 10 per head, too, was not charged to the Muslim delegates while they were served with all the delicacies of 'Dastar-Khan'... And these 'Waiz' delegates stopped in the pandal only a few minutes in the beginning and were to be found enjoying creature comforts under the refreshment shamianah outside the pandal for the rest of the sitting."[2]

"The majority of Muslim delegates had donned gold, silver or silk-embroidered *chogas* (flowing robes) over their ordinary coarse suits of wearing apparel. It was rumoured that these *chogas* had been lent by Hindu moneyed men for Congress *tamasha*. And of these the majority were admitted free to delegates' seats, board and lodging. Sir Syed Ahmed's anti-Congress League had tried in a public meeting to dissuade Muslims from joining the Congress as delegates. As a countermove the Congress people lighted the whole Congress Camp

some four nights before the session began and advertised that ingress that night would be free. The result was that all the *Chandu Khanas* (opium dens) of Lucknow were emptied and a huge audience of some thirty thousand Hindu and Muslim delegates were elected or selected. All this was admitted by the Lucknow Congress organisers to me in private.

"A show was being made of the Muslim delegates. A Muslim delegate gets up to second a resolution in Urdu. He begins –"Hazarat ! I am a Mohammedan delegate...." Some Hindu gets up and calls for three cheers for Mohammedan delegates – and the response is so enthusiastic as to be beyond description.

"Mr. Ranade was there to guide the deliberations of the Social Conference to which the title of 'National' was for the first and the last time given. The only Mohammedan delegate who joined the Indian National Social Conference was a Mufti Saheb from Barreilly. When the resolution in favour of the re-marriage of child widows was moved...the Mufti Saheb asked permission to speak. The President (the late Raj Baijnath) told Mufti Saheb that as the resolution concerned Hindus only, he need not speak. At this Muftiji flared up, '*Tab is-ka nam naishanel kuyn rak-kha hai?*' (Why then did you name this conference 'national' ?). Mufti Saheb was allowed to have his say. Mufti Saheb's argument was that as Hindu Shastras did not allow re-marriage it was a sin to press for it. Again when the resolution about the reconversion of those who had become Christians and Mussalmans came up, Mufti Saheb urged that when a man became an apostate and abandoned the Hindu religion, he ought not to be allowed to come back and contaminate the sacred Hindu society. Well, Mr. Ranade and other Hindu leaders were nonplussed, while Mufti Saheb must have been laughing in his sleeves."[3]

Investing Communalism with 'Veto'

The President of Congress at the Madras Session in 1887 was Badruddin Tyabji, a sophisticated and cultured Muslim gentleman who sincerely desired the welfare of the country. He was not a fanatic Muslim in the usual sense of the term. But even his views and sentiments were not basically different from those of Sir Syed. In his presidential address to the Congress he

emphasised that in Hindusthan there were several nations, each having its own special problems. There were certain problems common to all and they had assembled in Congress to discuss them.

On another occasion, in his reply to Sir Syed who had criticised him for joining the Congress, he wrote that it was with the intention of serving the interests of the Muslims from inside the Congress that he was there. A few days later he wrote a letter to A.O. Hume, wherein he stated that "if the Mussalman community as a whole was against the Congress – rightly or wrongly does not matter – it follows that the movement *ipso facto* ceases to be a general or National Congress."[4] He even suggested that the Congress be prorogued for five years. Tyabji also decided to devote his life to achieving 'Muslim unity – the watchword of Islam.' All this only reflected a dominant note in the Congress thinking that it was the Muslims who were to decide the 'national status' of the Congress.

The Congress also adopted an official resolution under Tyabji's presidentship in 1888 at Allahabad which declared that the Congress shall not discuss any fresh subject or pass any fresh resolution which the Hindu or Mohammedan delegates as a body oppose unanimously or nearly unanimously.

This was virtually granting the power of veto to Muslims, however small their number might be in the Congress, to torpedo any policy or programme of the Congress. Having once accepted this slippery position, no wonder, the Congress started on the downward journey with increased speed as days passed.

This was how the Congress – in place of educating the Muslims in lessons of the true content of emotional integration, that is, making them realise the dangers of separatism and persuading them to share the common national aspirations and joys and sorrows of the rest of their countrymen – began pampering their divisive tendencies.

By 1914, the First World War was on. England was plunged in a struggle for survival. It is well known that the oppressor's difficulty offers a moment of opportunity for the ensiaved to throw off his yoke. However, in the case of our nation, that period gave birth to a chain of events giving a dangerous twist to the entire course of our freedom struggle. The Congress had, as we have seen, strongly protested against the separate electo-

rates and weightages to Muslims. However, once the Reforms became a *fait accompli,* the Congress felt that there was no other course except to accept them if they had to win over the Muslims to their side.

When the First World War started and Turkey joined the German camp, the British initiated moves for the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire. The annulment of Bengal Partition and now the anti-Turkey moves by the British sent waves of anger and hatred among the Muslims against the British. The Congress now thought that a golden opportunity had been presented to win over the Muslims to their side. It was precisely in this background that the Congress leaders took to attending and addressing the League's sessions. In the weak and ineffective state of the Muslim League in those days, this step of the Congress proved to be a much needed tonic to boost its morale and popularity. It also contributed not a little to projecting Muslim League as the only representative organisation of Muslims at the all-India level.

Lucknow Pact : Sanction to Separatism

Further, the Congress, in order to snatch the 'initiative' from the British hands, now embarked upon a new adventure. It decided to enter into a pact directly with the Muslim League on the basis of a mutually agreed formula in lieu of the Morley-Minto Reforms. This was how both Congress and League came to hold their annual sessions simultaneously in 1916 at Lucknow. And here was born the Lucknow Pact blessed by all the stalwarts of the Congress like Tilak, Surrendranath Banerjea, Annie Besant and others. Tilak was all jubilation. He said that Lucknow had justified its name and exclaimed 'Luck now at Lucknow.'

What was the upshot of the Lucknow Pact ? It not only put its seal of approval on the principle of separate electorates to the Muslims (and also Sikhs) but also granted them weightage, i.e., greater representation than what their population warranted. In terms of the actual percentage among the elected Indian representations to the various provincial assemblies, the Muslims were granted 50% in the Punjab, 30% in U.P., 40% in Bengal, 25% in Bihar, 15% in Central Provinces and Berar, 15% in Madras and 33⅓% in Bombay. This new accord gave

Muslims a greater share in the Provincial Assemblies than what was granted in the 1909 Reforms.

Further, in the Imperial Legislative Council, the Muslim representation was enhanced to one-third of the Indian elected members to be elected by separate Muslim electorates in the several provinces.

There was one more clause. No bill or resolution introduced by a non-official member affecting one or the other community could be considered if it were opposed by three-fourths of the members of its community in the Imperial or Provincial Council.

The Congress, through the Lucknow Pact, had given its sanction to two major pernicious doctrines : one, the right of Muslims for separate communal electorate and communal representation ; two, the claim of Muslim League to speak for the entire Muslim community in India. Among the top leaders of the Congress, Pandit Malaviya's was the only voice of protest and disapproval of the Lucknow Pact.

Tilak was, however, quite well aware that "the Hindus had yielded too much to the Muslims." But he thought it worth while because even if the British were to transfer power to Muslims or any other community then "the fight would be between them and other sections of the community and not as at present a triangular fight." C.S. Ranga Iyer, who was in close touch with Tilak during the time, later observed that Tilak 'would not listen to any arguments against the Pact. Not that he was enamoured of it himself, but if it would satisfy the Muslims, if it could bring them to the Congress, if it could replace their extra-territorial patriotism by Indian Nationalism, he felt the agreement was worth reaching."[5]

However, as subsequent events proved, Tilak's hopes were not only belied, but the Lucknow Pact started off a race between the British and the Congress to win over Muslims to their respective sides. If the British took one step, the Congress took two. The British would then take one more step. And the Congress would try to overtake them by another dose of concessions and so on. At the back of this suicidal race lay the British hand. They would publicly tell the Congress to come forward with a joint Hindu-Muslim accord and privately whisper into the Muslim ears not to join hands with the Hindus. This

would tempt the Congress to offer more concessions to the Muslims. The Muslims would grab them and demand more. And so it went on.

The Constitutional Reforms announced in August 1919 had incorporated all the important features of the Lucknow Pact in the matter of Muslim representation.

The Report : Homilies in Theory, Negation in Practice

It is, however, interesting to note that even while introducing the poisonous seed of separatism in Indian politics, Montagu and Chelmsford could not help devoting three paras in the Report to point out the dangers inherent in the scheme of communal electorates. Under the para "They (communal electorates) are opposed to the teaching of history," the Report said : "Some persons hold that for a people, such as they deem those of India to be, so divided by race, religion, and caste as to be unable to consider the interests of any but their own section, a system of communal and class representation is not merely inevitable but is actually best ... We conclude unhesitatingly that the history of self-government among the nations who developed it, and spread it through the world, is decisively against the admission by the state of any divided allegiance ; against the State's arranging its members in any way which encourages them to think of themselves primarily as citizens of a smaller unit than itself."

Under the next para "They perpetuate class divisions" the Report said : "Division by creeds and classes means the creation of political camps organised agaist each other and teaches men to think as partisans and not as citizens, and it is difficult to see how the change from this system to national representation is ever to occur. The British Government is often accused of dividing men in order to govern them. But if it unnecessarily divides them at the very moment when it professes to start them on the road to governing themselves, it will find it difficult to meet the charge of being hypocritical or shortsighted."

Thirdly, under the para "They stereotype existing relations" it said : "A minority which is given special representation owing to its weak and backward state is positively encouraged to settle down into a feeling of satisfied security ; it is under no inducement to educate and qualify itself to make

good the ground which it has lost compared with the stronger majority. On the other hand, the latter will be tempted to feel that they have done all they need do for their weaker fellow-countrymen and that they are free to use their power for their own purposes. The give-and-take which is the essence of political life is lacking. There is no inducement to the one side to forbear, or to the other to exert itself."

Finally, the Report concluded : We regard any system of communal electorates as a very serious hindrance to the development of the self-governing principle. The evils of any extension of the system are plain."

However, in the very next breath, the Report exposed its height of hypocrisy by its recommendation for continuation of communal electorates not only for Muslims but by extending them to Sikhs as well : "At the same time, we must face the hard facts. The Mohammandans were given special representation with separate electorates in 1909. The Hindus' acquiescence is embodied in the present agreement between the political leaders of the two communities. The Muhammadans regard these as settled facts, and any attempt to go back on them would rouse a storm of bitter protest and put a severe strain on the loyalty of a community which has behaved with conspicuous loyalty during a period of very great difficulty, and which we know to be feeling no small anxiety for its own welfare under a system of popular government .... But apart from a pledge which we must honour until we are released from it, we are bound to see that the ccmmunity secures proper representation in the new councils. How can we say to them that we regard the decision of 1909 as mistaken, that its retention is incompatible with progress towards responsible government, that its reversal will eventually be to their benefit ; and that for these reasons we have decided to go back on it ? Much as we regret the necessity, we are convinced that so far as the Muhammadans at all events are concerned the present system must be maintained until conditions alter, even at the price of slower progress towards the realization of a common citizenship. But we can see no reason to set up communal representation for Muhammadans in any province where they form a majority of the voters."

However, as we shall presently see, even this last mentioned rider was abandoned in the Communal Award of 1932 and the

Muslims were accorded separate electorates even in such provinces where they were in majority.

The same double talk was indulged in by the Report in the case of Sikhs also : "Any general extension of the communal system, however, would only encourage still further demands, and would in our deliberate opinion be fatal to that development of representation upon the national basis on which alone a system of responsible government can possibly be rooted. At the same time, we feel that there is one community from whom it is inexpendient to withhold the concession. The Sikhs in the Punjab are a distinct and important people; they supply a gallant and valuable element to the Indian Army; but they are everywhere in a minority, and experience has shown that they go virtually unrepresented. To the Sikhs, therefore, and to them alone, we propose to extend the system already adopted in case of Muhammadans."[6] The Report did not stop at that; it sought to further divide the Indian population by granting communal representation by nomination to Europeans, Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians, while in Madras and Bombay a definite proportion of non-Mohammadan seats was reserved for non-Brahmins and Mahrattas.

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8

Khilafat Movement : 'A Himalayan Error'

THE CLOSE of the First World War of 1914-18 had given rise to certain new forces affecting the internal situation of Bharat – forces issuing mainly from the British policy of dismembering the Turkish empire after the war. During the war, Britain, with a view to weakening Turkey from within, made tempting offers of independent statehood to certain States under the Turkish sovereignty to be fulfilled after the close of war. After the defeat of Germany and Turkey in the war, the British set up Arabia, till then a part of the Turkish empire, as a separate independent state. Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq too became independent states shaking off the Turkish hegemony.

At the same time Mustafa Kemal Pasha, a highly gifted revolutionary leader, rose in Turkey and brushed aside the corrupt and weak regime of the Caliph and resolved to build a new and powerful Turkey on modern nationalist lines. The Caliph was the dynastic Sultan of Turkey and was looked upon as the temporal representative of Allah and the religious head of the entire Islamic world. However, Kemal Pasha decided to purge his country of Arabism and liberate it from the stranglehold of *mullahs* and *maulvis*. He put down with an iron hand the opposition from the Islamic zealots to his measures.

In this radical step, Kemal Pasha was reinforced by the ideological foundation for progressive reforms in the Muslim world laid by Jamaluddin Afghani, an Arab born in Afghanistan in 1838. Jamaluddin was a religious scholar who advocated a liberal reform movement in all the Muslim countries. He emphasised the need to give up the habit of clinging to the past, in order to achieve intellectual progress in harmony with modern knowledge. He claimed that the law of Islam was capable of the most liberal development and added that Sunni Islam was

capable of adopting itself to both the highest cravings of the human soul and the needs of modern life. However, this could only be done if Muslim thought freed itself from the chains in which it had lain for many centuries. He attacked the autocratic rule of the Turkish Caliphate which had stifled the intellectual progress of the Muslims. He felt that as the *Amit-il-Momineen* or the Caliph, the Turkish Sultan practised only despotism and cared little for spiritual progress. Just as the Turkish Caliph had abdicated his role as the spiritual leader of the World Muslims, the obscurantist *ulama* had stifled all progress in religious thought by their fanaticism.[1]

Congress Takes the Plunge

From the day Turkey joined the German camp (4 November 1914), Muslims in Bharat also began swerving away from the British. And when, after the close of the war, the Turkish empire was dismembered and the Caliph's sovereignty breathed its last, the Muslims' ire against the British took a new edge.

For the first time, now, Muslims remembered Hindus, for they very well knew that without the latter's co-operation they could not hope to put up a powerful resistance against the British. Moulana Abdul Bari speaking in the Khilafat Conference declared : "The Muslims' honour would be at stake if they forget the co-operation of the Hindus. I for my part will say that we should stop cow-killing, irrespective of their co-operation, because we are children of the same soil. As a *maulvi* I say that in voluntarily stopping cow-killing we shall not offend against the canons of our religion. Nothing has so helped the Hindu–Muslim unity as the Hindus' co-operation with us on the question of Khilafat."[2]

The Muslim League, in its session in December 1919, discussed at length the issue of Khilafat injustice and invited the Congress leaders to join hands with them. Most of the eminent Congress leaders like Pandit Motilal Nehru,Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Gandhiji responded with great enthusiasm and joined the discussions. All of them firmly believed that here was a golden opportunity to wean the Muslims away from the British fold and draw them into the Congress camp. Motilal Nehru who was then the Congress President said : "It is impossible for one part of the nation to stand aloof while the

other part is suffering from a serious grievance."

Gandhiji gave an ideological footing to the whole issue of Khilafat : "The Khilafat agitation does not centre round an individual but round an idea, which is at once temporal, spiritual and political. If the Turks cannot defend, if the Mussalmans of the world do not by their power of opinion and active sympathy stand by the Turks, both they and the latter will suffer irretrievably. Such an event will be a calamity for the world, for I believe that Islam has its place in the world, as much as Christianity and every other religion. Chivalry demands the support for the Turks in the hour of their need".[3] On the practical plane too, Gandhiji affirmed : "The Khilafat question gave the two communities the opportunity of a life-time to unite. If the Hindus wish to cultivate eternal friendship with Mussalmans, they must perish with them in the attempt to vindicate the honour of Islam."[4] And to the Mussalmans, Gandhiji gave the call ; "Arise, awake, or be forever fallen."

Gandhiji followed up his words with actions. He came forward to lead the Khilafat agitation himself. Congress met at an emergent session in Calcutta in August 1920. Gandhiji moved the resolution calling for non-co-operation movement by the Congress on the issue of Khilafat. In the original draft of the resolution there was but a single issue of Kailafat but on the insistence of the Congress President Vijayaraghavachari and others, demand for Swaraj and protest against the atrocious Rowlatt Act and the Government's diabolic massacre at Jallianwalla Bagh were included in the resolution. It was admitted that the latter two issues were added for enlisting the co-operation of the Hindus in the movement.

It must be noted here that Gandhiji had taken the Khilafat decision independently of the Congress even before its session, and had assumed its leadership also. The Congress just followed suit. However, in the Congress, voices were not wanting warning about the dangers of a national body like Congress plunging into an anti-government movement – and more so on a fanatically religious issue like the Khilafat. Vijayaraghavachari, the president himself, sounded one such dissenting note. The motion moved by Gandhiji was opposed by C. R. Das, B.C. Pal, Annie Besant, C. F. Andrews, Rabindranath Tagore, Jinnah and others. The motion faced stiff opposition and was carried by 1886 against 884 votes.

It was, obviously, Gandhiji's overpowering personality which had made the Congress toe his line. It is also to be noted that Gandhiji had employed his ultimate *astra* – the weapon of non-co-operation – against the British for the first time, not on the issue of Swaraj – but on the one like Khilafat.

Gandhiji, while returning the Kaiser-e-Hind Medal and the Julu and Boer War Medals awarded to him by the British for his services in those wars, wrote : "Valuable as these honours have been to me, I cannot wear them with an easy conscience so long as my Mussalman countrymen have to labour under the wrong done to their religious sentiment. I venture to return these medals, in pursuance of the scheme of Non-co-operation inaugurated today in connection with Khilafat movement."[5] In those days Khilafat and Swaraj had become almost synonymous terms. Nay, Gandhiji went further and declared, "I would, in order to achieve success in the Khilafat issue, even postpone the issue of Swaraj."

Not Gandhiji alone, but many of the Congress stalwarts seem to have honestly believed that the Muslims could be won over through this move. Lokmanya Tilak told Gangadhararao Deshpande, the Karnataka leader, "the idea of helping the Muslims in their Khilafat agitation is a sound one and Mahatma Gandhi's lead in this matter should be supported by all."[6]

Lala Lajpat Rai in his presidential address to the extra-ordinary session of Congress at Calcutta in 1920 stated that "the Hindu-Muslim unity betokens the dawn of a new day in the history of India. And it will be extremely foolish and short-sighted to throw this chance which only comes once perhaps in a century." However, he also sounded a note of caution that "Hindus should go with their Muslim Countrymen in the latter's campaign of non-co-operation only so far as it is consistent with our duty to the country."

Swami Shraddhananda, the great Arya Samaj leader, was also one of those in the forefront of the agitation. His inspiring oration before a vast congregation of Muslims and Hindus inside the precincts of Jamma Masjid in Delhi had thrilled the audience. A popular photograph appearing in papers those days was of Sri Shankaracharya of Puri Peeth posing alongside Khilafat leaders like Mohamed Ali, Shaukat Ali and Saifuddin Kitchlew.

In this overflowing effervescence of 'Hindu-Muslim Unity'

voices of reason and caution were drowned. Sir Syed, himself an uncompromising separatist, nevertheless strongly decried the belief that the Caliph's sovereignty extended over the entire Muslim world. He got a scholarly article written by Maulana Shibli proving that the tradition of Caliphs had ended with the Fourth Caliph. Mohammed Ali Jinnah was another Muslim leader who was opposed to this issue. True to his words, Jinnah kept himself aloof from the Khilafat campaign and invited political exile for himself. Dr. Ansari also was among those who opposed the movement.

It is interesting to know that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, himself an outstanding authority on Islam, swore loyalty to the Turkish Caliphate. It was, he felt, necessary in the interests of International Islam. He also upheld *jehad* as a religious obligation of the Muslims against those who had occupied parts of *Dar-ul-Islam* : "While fighting against the Britishers was a religious duty – a *jehad* – for the Muslims, it was a call of patriotism for the Hindus."

Turkey Repudiates Khilafat

When the situation was hotting up here in Bharat, the Sultan Abdul Majid himself, then a puppet in the hands of the British, had scurried out of Turkey to Malta in a British ship in order to escape from the fury of his countrymen. The rise of a powerful nationalist state in Turkey, however, did not fit into the global strategy of the British. They, therefore, tried to set up the Caliph against Kemal Pasha and prodded Aga Khan to join hands with the Caliph. Aga Khan and Amir Ali wired to Kemal Pasha begging him to save the Caliphate of Majid. When Kemal Pasha threw it into the waste-paper basket, the two leaders personally went in a delegation to urge him to restore the full Caliphal authority to Abdul Majid. Kemal Pasha treated them with utter contempt and derided Aga Khan (a Shia) and Amir Ali (a Khoja) as heretics of Islam who had no business to advise the Sunni Turkish Muslims.

Now, the deputation urged Kemal Pasha himself to assume the Caliphal throne. Kemal Pasha confronted them with a simple and straight question: "You being the subjects of English and French dominions, would you be in a position to obey my commands if I were to assume the title of Caliph ?"

The delegation was in a quandary and looked utterly foolish. Kemal Pasha then remarked: "If you are not in a position to carry out my orders, what is the use of my becoming a mere ornamental Caliph?" Kemal Pasha said that it was ironical for Aga Khan and Amir Ali, who were pillars of British Rule in India and had supported the British against Turkey, to come forward to advise Turks on their national policy. Kemal Pasha then widely publicised the antecedents of Aga Khan and showed him up for what he was – a British stooge. Kemal Pasha not only declined scornfully to become the Caliph, he laid the axe at that theocratic institution itself by abolishing the Caliphate altogether. He said, "Islam is the religion of a defeated people. Since the day it has stepped on our soil, the condition of Turkey has steadily deteriorated." He dethroned Islam from the pedestal of the official state-religion and transformed Turkey into a secular state.

But the Khilafat leaders in India would not rest even after that humiliating rebuttal. Under the leadership of Ali brothers they approached King Abdul Azeez Ibn-Saud of Arabia to become their new Caliph. He too knew that it was a British strategy. He put the Khilafat leaders in a tight corner by asking them, "If it is Islam you are so zealous about, why don't you join hands with Gandhi and free India of the British first? That's what Islam teaches. You come to me as a slave of the British, and it seems to me that you have come to lead me into a British trap." He told them to buzz off after the customary 3-day Arab hospitality – and to give his *salaams* to Gandhiji. When Shaukat Ali protested, Abdul Azeez got up, held the two brothers by their beards and knocked their heads together! [7]

Disappointed in Turkey and Arabia, the Khilafat leaders approached the Reza Shah Pehlah, the ruler of Iran. But the Shah, proud of his Aryan tradition, evinced little interest either in the Khilafat or in the affairs of the Indian Muslims. Khilafat leaders had to return empty-handed – but not any the wiser for all their mortifying adventures.

How queer that the Muslims in Bharat should have taken it upon themselves to espouse a cause such as Khilafat – which Turkey itself had rejected and banished from its land and which all other Muslim countries had refused to touch even with a

pair of tongs – and go about beating their breasts that Islam was in danger ! And how still more strange that our national leadership too should have become so zealous over it and made it an issue for a national movement !

Though the efforts of Khilafat leaders abroad fell like a house of cards, their fury would not abate inside Bharat. The fanatic *mullahs* and *maulvis* began to preach to the gullible Muslim masses that Bharat was *Dar-ul-Harb*, a hostile country ; that it was the command of Quran that Muslims should not stay in such a land even for a day, but should undertake *hijarat*, i.e., emigrate to *Dar-ul-Islam*, the Islamic land. While Mohammed Ali the right hand man of Gandhiji declared Bharat as *Dar-ul-Harb*, Maulana Abdul Bari circulated a *fatwa* – a religious command – for *hijarat*. And nearly twenty thousand poor and ignorant Muslims, believing sincerely in their leaders' words, left their age-old hearths and homes and began to trek to Afghanistan – their dreamland of *Dar-ul-Islam*. But *hijarat* for them proved to be a disastrous nightmare. The Afghans mercilessly stopped them at their borders, looted them and turned them back as unwanted guests.

Many of them succumbed to the rigours of the hazardous journey. Battered and bruised, and their dreams shattered, they came back to Bharat, the *Dar-ul-Harb*, to seek security and peace ! However, on their return to their places they found themselves homeless and penniless, their property having already been sold out by them for a tuppence.

This is how Nehru has analysed the mentality of Indian Muslims in those days :

"In the troubled days of Turkey War, both Muslims and Hindus sympathised with it for different reasons : for the former it was a part of religious duty and an expression of Pan-Islamic urge, for the latter it was a sympathy for a foreign country in distress. Such Muslims searched for their national roots elsewhere. To some extent they found them in the Afghan and Moghul periods of India, but this was not quite enough to fill the vacuum. This search for cultural roots led Indian Muslims to Islamic history and to the periods when Islam was a conquering and creative force in Baghdad, Spain, Constantinople, Central Asia and elsewhere. The Moghul Emperors in India recognised no Caliph (or Spiritual Superior) outside India.

It was only after the complete collapse of the Moghul power early in the 19th century that the name of the Turkish Sultan began to be mentioned in Indian mosques. This practice was confirmed after the Mutiny."[8]

Nehru, at another place, depicted the 1919–22 Khilafat period as representing a strange mixture of "nationalism and politics and religion and mysticism and fanaticism...." He then says that "this nationalism was itself a composite force and behind it could be distinguished a Hindu nationalism and Muslim nationalism partly looking beyond the frontiers of India."[9]

More than the immediate issues of the Khilafat agitation, the tragic results that followed had a deranging and snowballing effect on the entire future course of Indian politics.

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9

Tragic Fruits of Khilafat

A TERRIBLE and gruesome fallout of the Khilafat experiment was witnessed in Kerala. By 1921, the movement had totally fizzled out. No wonder that issue, having no roots in the soil of Bharat, should have dried up and collapsed as suddenly as it had erupted. However, in Kerala a vicious propaganda was set afloat among the local Muslims – the Moplahs – that the Khilafat agitation was crowned with success, that the British regime had come to an end and Khilafat had been reinstated. Now was the time to eliminate all *kafirs* and establish *Dar-ul-Islam*, they were told. The Moplah zealots' imagination was set aflame by this call of their Khilafat leaders – the *mullahs* and *maulvis*. Soon, they anointed one Mohommed Haji as their Caliph and proclaimed *jehad*. Their fury was first directed against the British. Grim and bitter encounters ensued. The extent and intensity of the Moplah outburst can be gauged from the following figures. Among the rioters the number killed was 2,266, wounded 1,615, captured 5,688 and surrendered 38,656. Finally the 'Khilafat King' and his close followers fell into British hands. They were court-marshalled and summarily hanged.

Moplah Carnage

Moplahs, defeared and frustrated in their encounter with the British, now turned their unspent wrath against the unsuspecting Hindus. For, the Hindus. in their eyes, were as much *Kāfirs* as the British. The Hindus who had lost themselves in the enchanting hullabaloo of '*Hindu Muslim Bhai Bhai*' and '*Allah-ho-Akbar*' became an easy prey to the Moplah onslaught. *Allah-ho-Akbar* (God is great) had, in fact, become the battle-cry of the Khilafat movement all over the country.

Gandhiji pronounced it as greater than *Bharat-Mata-Ki-Jai*, since Allah, the God, was greater than Bharat Mata, the country. However, to the common Muslim masses, *Allah-ho-Akbar* was simply a battle-cry against the *Kafirs*.

According to the Report of the Enquiry Committee of Servants of India Society, the number of Hindus murdered was 1,500, the number of those forcibly converted 20,000, and property looted about Rs. 3 crores. There was no end to molestations and abductions of Hindu women. Dr. Annie Besant stated: "They murdered and plundered abundantly, and killed or drove away all Hindus who would not apostatize. Somewhere about a lakh of people were driven from their homes with nothing but the clothes they had on, stripped of everything."[1] She also accused the Khilafat religious preachers for all these terrible atrocities.

J. Campbell, Chief of the Central Intelligence Department, and even Theodore Morrison, a champion of Muslim separatism, held the Khilafat leaders squarely responsible for inciting racial hatred resulting in the Moplah carnage.

In Malabar, as in Rajasthan during the Moghul reign, hundreds of Hindu women preferred death to dishonour and immolated themselves by whatever means that lay at their command. In a heart-rending petition submitted to Lady Reading, wife of the Viceroy, the Hindu women-folk of Malabar stated: "Your Ladyship is doubtless aware that though our unhappy district has witnessed many Moplah outbreaks in the course of the last one hundred years, the present rebellion is unexampled in its magnitude as well as unprecedented in its ferocity. It is possible that your Ladyship is not fully apparised of all the horrors and atrocities perpetrated by the fiendish rebels: of the many wells and tanks filled up with the mutilated, but often only half-dead, bodies of our nearest and dearest ones who refused to abandon the faith of our fathers: of pregnant women cut to pieces and left on the roadsides and in the jungles, with the unborn babe protruding from the mangled corpse: of our innocent and helpless children torn from our arms and done to death before our eyes and of our husbands and fathers tortured, flayed and burnt alive, of our helpless sisters forcibly carried away from the midst of kith and kin and subjected to every shame and outrage which the vile and

brutal imagination of these inhuman hell-hounds could conceive of : of thousands of our homesteads reduced to cinder-mounds out of sheer savagery and a wanton spirit of destruction : of our places of worship desecrated and destroyed and of the images of deity shamefully insulted by putting the entrails of slaughtered cows where flower garlands used to lie, or else smashed to pieces... We remember how driven out of our native hamlets we wandered, starving and naked, in the jungles and forests...."[2]

Even to those who appealed to the Moplahs in the name of Gandhiji to follow the ways of peace and non-violence they bluntly replied : "Gandhi is a *kafir*, how can he be our leader ?"

The Congress became, more than anything else, anxious that the Moplah affair should not be allowed to poison the 'amicable' atmosphere created between Hindus and Muslims because of the Khilafat issue. In the Subjects Committee meeting of the Congress it was proposed, to start with, to condemn outright the Moplah riots but as discussion continued it got gradually toned down. The resolution finally adopted by the Congress Working Committee, while expressing its sense of regret over the violent deeds of Moplahs in certain areas of Malabar, however added, "Whilst, however, condemning violence on the part of the Moplahs, the Working Committee desires it to be known that the evidence in its possession shows that provocation beyond endurance was given to the Moplahs and that the reports published by and on behalf of the Government have given a one-sided and highly exaggerated account of the wrongs done by the Moplahs."[3] The Congress resolution put the number of conversions at just three.

Smami Shraddhananda points out how, during the discussions on the resolution, 'nationalist Muslims' in the Congress too had come out openly and aggressively in their communal colours: "The Hindu members themselves proposed amendments till it (the resolution) was reduced to condemning only certain individuals who had been guilty of the above crimes. But some of the Muslim leaders could not bear even this. Maulana Fakhir and other *maulanas*, of course, opposed the resolution and there was no wonder. But I was surprised when an out-and-out nationalist like Maulana Hazarat Mohani opposed the resolution on the ground that as the Moplah country no longer

remained *Dar-ul-Aman* but became *Dar-ul-Harb* and as they suspected the Hindus of collusion with the British enemies of the Moplahs, therefore the Moplahs were right in presenting the Quran or the sword to the Hindus. And if the Hindus became Mussalmans to save themselves from death, it was a voluntary change of faith and not forcible conversion. Well, even the harmless resolution condemning some of the Moplahs was not unanimously passed but had to be accepted by a majority of votes only."[4]

The Pan-Islamic Threat

The doctrine of pan-Islamism, *Dar-ul-Harb*, cutting across national boundaries, now began to be openly preached. Mohammed Ali in his address to the Muslim League Session in 1924 said that parts of the Frontier Province, which legitimately belonged to the country beyond India's borders of river Sindhu, should be given back to those people. And this statement of his was received with a loud applause from the audience.

It was all too patent that the Muslim mind was fully inflamed against the *'kafir Hindu'* because of the incessant and virulent propaganda of the Khilafat Muslim leaders. The Khilafat Muslim leaders had even sent telegrams to Moplah rebels extolling them as heroes fighting for the glory of their religion. Gandhiji felt that something should be done to retrieve the situation. He took one step further than the Congress resolution to win back the Muslims. In a reference to Moplah rioters he said, "They are a brave god-fearing people who were fighting for what they consider as religion, and in a manner which they considered religious."[5]

Annie Besant's trenchant comments on the Islamic character of Moplah ontrage are worth recalling: "Malabar has taught us what Islamic rule still means, and we do not want to see another specimen of the Khilafat Raj in India. How sympathy with the Moplahs is felt by the Muslims outside Malabar has been proved by the defence raised by them for their fellow believers, and by Mr. Gandhi himself, who stated that they had acted as they believed that religion taught them to act. I fear that this is true; but there is no place in a civilized land for people who drive away out of the country those who refuse to apostatise from their ancestral faiths."[6]

Leadership for Muslim Zealots

The Khilafat movement gave birth to two long-range catastrophic results. First, Muslim fanaticism secured a position of prestige in Indian politics thereafter ; their religious loyalty took precedence over national loyalty, their extra-territorial loyalties were set aflame ; the Muslim population so long divided among various groups and political pulls now got crystallised into a single direction ; their thinking got focused towards a definite goal. Secondly, a new fanatic leadership riding on the crest of Khilafat wave came to wield the reins of Muslim leadership thereafter.

In this connection, it is instructive to understand how the Ali Brothers, Maulana Mohammed Ali and Maulana Shoukat Ali, came to occupy the position of the "right hand and left hand" of Gandhiji. Gandhiji writes : "I was seeking the friendship of good Mussalmans and was eager to understand the Mussalman mind through contact with their purest and most patriotic representatives. I therefore never needed any pressure to go with them wherever they took me in order to get into intimate touch with them."[7] And this search of Gandhiji took him to the Ali brothers who had been sentenced to two years' imprisonment by the Government for their 'seditious speeches' at the All-India Khilafat Conference on 8 July 1921. Ali Brothers had declared that service under the British Governments was unlawful on religious grounds and it was the duty of Muslim soldiers in the Indian Army to resign.

Gandhiji proceeded to win their friendship and confidence : "I opened correspondence with the Government for the release of the Brothers. In that connection I studied the Brothers' views and activities about the Khilafat. I had discussions with Mussalman friends. I felt that if I would become a true friend of the Muslims, I must render all possible help in securing the release of the Brothers and a just settlement of the Khilafat question."[8]

To what extent Gandhiji was prepared to go in this direction is shown by a significant episode in those days. The Prince of Wales was to visit India in 1921. The Civil Disobedience Movement was still on. The Viceroy, Lord Reading, who was keen on seeing that the Prince's visit was not boycotted by the public, made an offer to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya that the

Government would release all the arrested Congressmen and summon a Round Table Conference to settle the future constitution, if the Congress agreed to call off the movement immediately. However, when these terms of agreement were communicated to Gandhiji he insisted on the inclusion of release of Ali Brothers and their associates as part of the agreement. The Viceroy was in no mood to accede to this, and the proposal fell through. C. R. Das, who had taken a leading part in the parleys, was furious and remarked that the chance of a lifetime had been lost.

Mohammed Ali was a total stranger to Arabic and Persian languages. The status of *maulana* was the privilege of only those who were proficient in these language. But a special rule was made in the case of Mohammed Ali and the status conferred on him for his 'proficiency in *tabligh* (Conversion)'!

Neither of the Ali Brothers ever concealed their commitment to the separatist Muslim ambitions. Mohammed Ali had, from the presidential chair of the Congress in 1923, justified every one of the moves of separatist Muslim politics : He commended the approach of Sir Syed as wise and upheld the separate electorates as being congenial to the advent of Hindu-Muslim unity. He considered the partition of Bengal as having benefited the Muslims and roundly condemned its annulment as an ignoble betrayal unparalleled in the history of Indian politics. He even suggested that the country be divided into different reserved areas where each religion could have the monopoly of proselytisation. He asked the Hindus either to absorb the Depressed Classes immediately or to allow the Muslims to convert them to Islam.

It was such personalities as these who were projected as leaders of Congress in general and Muslims in particular. In the Congress Sessions they were the propped-up heroes. At the Amritsar Session of the Congress in December 1919, when the Ali Brothers entered the pandal, and ascended the dais with their fur-caps with Crescent and black gowns, the whole audience became transported to ecstasy and rent the sky with cheers to their names.

Gandhiji continued to spread his protecting wings over the various acts of omission and commission of his Khilafat colleagues. Swami Shraddhananda narrates one such incident at a

Khilafat Conference in Nagpur, where he had accompanied Gandhiji : "The *ayats* (verses) of the Quran recited by Maulanas on that occasion contained frequent references to *jehad* against and the killing of *kafirs*. But when I drew his attention to this phase of the Khilafat movement Mahatmaji smiled and said, 'They are alluding to the British bureaucracy.' In reply I said that it was all subversive of the idea of non-violence and when revulsion of feeling came, the Muhammadan Maulanas would not refrain from using these verses against the Hindus."[9] We have already seen how in the case of Moplah riots the Swami's fears had proved only too true.

The Swami has given one more instance of how Khilafat leaders enjoyed indulgence at the hands of Gandhiji :

"While people came to the conclusion that the burning of foreign cloth was a religious duty of Indians and Messrs. Das, Nehru and other topmost leaders made bonfire of cloth worth thousands, the Khilafat Mussalmans got permission from Mahatmaji to send all foreign cloth for the use of the Turkish brethren. This again was a great shock to me..."[10]

The Ali Brothers had more than once affirmed their loyalty to the doctrine of Pan-Islamism. Mohammed Ali had, in 1921, addressed a letter to Amanulla, the Amir of Afghanistan, inviting him to invade Bharat. The British got scent of this and arrested the Ali Brothers. The following statement of Mohammed Ali before the Jury in the Sessions Court with regard to his stand vis-a-vis the Afghan invasion only cnfirmed his complicity :

"If His Majesty (the Amir of Afghanistan) is impelled by the same religious motive to contemplate *jehad* against those who are in wrongful occupation of the Jazirutal-Arab and the holy places ;... who aim at the weakening of Islam, and deny to us the full freedom to advocate its cause : ... then the clear law of Islam requires that no Mussalman should render any assistance against him (the Amir), and if the *jehad* approaches his region every Mussalman must join the Mujahidin and assist them to the best of his or her power."[11]

However, on Mohammed Ali's written assurance that he was no opponent of the British, he was released. It is on record that, again in 1921, when the Khilafat agitation was at its peak, Mohammed Ali sent a wire to Amanullah urging him not to

enter into any kind of peaceful agreement with Britain. Mohammed Ali complained to Swami Shraddhananda about the Congress leaders, taking him to task for his act. When the Swami also criticised him, Mohammed Ali took him aside and gave him the hand-written draft of a wire. Swami Shraddhananda writes: "What was my astonishment when I saw the draft of the self-same telegram in the peculiar handwriting of the Father of the non-violent non-co-operation movement!"[12] To this charge, however, Gandhiji replied that he did not remember to have done so.

Rumours became rife that the Ali Brothers would again be put behind bars on charges of treason. Gandhiji joined issue with the Government and declared at a public meeting on 10th May 1921 in Allahabad: "I cannot understand why the Ali Brothers are going to be arrested as the rumour goes, and why I am to remain free. They had done nothing which I would not do. If they had sent a message to the Amir, I also would send one to inform the Amir, that if he came no Indian, so long as I can help it, would help the Government to drive him back."[13]

Writing in *Young India* in May 1921, Gandhiji declared, "I would, in a sense, certainly assist the Amir of Afghanistan if he waged war against the British Government. That is to say, I would openly tell my countrymen that it would be a crime to help a Government which has lost the confidence of the nation to remain in power."[14]

And again, "It is no part of the duty of a non-violent non-co-operator to assist the Government against war made upon it by others. A non-violent non-co-operator may not secretly or openly encourage or assist any such war. But it is no part of his duty to help the Government to end the war. On the contrary his prayer could be, as it must be, for the defeat of a power which he seeks to destroy. I, therefore, so far as my creed of non-violence is concerned, can contemplate an Afghan invasion with perfect equanimity, and equally so far as India's safety is concerned."[15]

Gandhiji had to face a barrage of criticisms and resentment from his admirers as well as others for his support to the fanatic Ali Brothers in the Afghan affair. Prominent personalities like V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, C. Y. Chintamani, the Editor of *Leader*, Allahabad, and C. F. Andrews, Gandhiji's confidant,

candidly told Gandhiji that his speeches and writings were undoubtedly such as to justify the act of Mohammed Ali's invitation to the Amir of Afghanistan.

But how did the Muslim leaders respond to these over-generous gestures of Gandhiji ? Hakim Ajmal Khan was considered a genuine '24-carat' nationalist by the Congressites. While presiding over the Khilafat conference at Ahmedabad in December 1922, he gave out his inner conviction, with Gandhiji and all others sitting by his side on the dais, regarding the 'glorious future' awaiting Pan-Islamic Empire : "India on the one side and Asia Minor on the other are but two extreme links in a chain of future Islamic Federation, which are gradually but surely joining together all intermediate States in one great system."[16]

In 1924 Maulana Mohammed Ali went a step ahead and launched a personal diatribe against Gandhiji and made this appalling statement at Aligarh and Ajmer : "However pure Mr. Gandhiji's character may be, he must appear to me from the point of view of religion inferior to any Mussalman, even though he be without character."

An year later when he was questioned at a public meeting in Lucknow, the Maulana accepted and even 'improved' upon his previous saying : "Yes, according to my religion and creed, I do hold and adulterous and a fallen Mussalman to be better than Mr. Gandhi."[17]

The sorrows of Khilafat did not end with these terrible consequences. More were in store, and as days passed they assumed newer and more disastrous dimensions.

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10

Conversions, Riots Galore

SWAMI SHRADDHANANDA was among the top leaders who were arrested during the Khilafat agitation. However, after his release he found that the Muslims had launched a crusade for converting Hindus, and the hapless Hindus were being harassed and victimised everywhere. The intensity of the crusading zeal of Muslims could be gauged from the way Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew, a well-known 'nationalist' Muslim leader, uttered a warning to Hindus in a public speech at Lahore early in 1925 : "Listen, my dear Hindu brothers, listen very attentively. If you put obstacles in the path of our *Tanzim* movement, and do not give us our rights, we shall make common cause with Afghanistan or some other Mussalman power and establish our rule in this country."[1]

The speed with which the conversion drive of Muslim *maulvis* and *mullahs* was yielding fruits was highly commended in a report prepared by Dr. Abdulla Suhravardy, a one-time prominent leader of Swaraj party of C. R. Das and member of the 'Indian Central Committee': "The process of proselytisation, acquiring fresh strength, vigour and stimulus with the fall of Muslim rule in India, goes on unabated and is ceaselessly at work. Islam claims every year converts to Islam, (who) along with the descendants of the earlier converts, are amongst its most zealous followers and adherents.... They flock by the thousands to Mecca, the centre and cradle of Islam, and cast into the fiery furnace of the discipline of the annual pilgrimage, they return to India purged and purified, and adopting the manners and customs of Arabia, become as distinct from the Hindus as the Hindus are from the Chinese and Jews."[2]

Martyrdom of Swami Shraddhananda

Swami Shraddhananda felt that unless immediate and

rigorous steps were taken to stem the Hindu exodus the fate of Hindus and of the country would be sealed. He launched a *Shuddhi* campaign for bringing the converted back to the Hindu fold. Because of his indomitable courage, saintly character and moving oration, thousands of converts who had succumbed to threat, coercion or temptation now began to respond to his appeal. In the first half of 1923 alone more than 18,000 Muslims returned to the Hindu fold in some parts of U.P. The Muslim *mullahs* felt the ground slipping from beneath their feet and began arraigning the Swamiji for his 'anti-Islamic tirade.' Their logic was simple : *Tabligh* – conversion to Islam – is a religious duty ordained to them by Quran and as such their exclusive divine right which could not be claimed by *kafirs* for reconversion. Oddly enough, even some Hindu Congress leaders joined the Muslim chorus in denouncing the Swami.

Swami Shraddhananda makes these caustic comments in his Memoirs: "On the 13th February 1923, I was called to lead the movement for the reclamation of Malkana Rajputs by their several brotherhoods and later on in the removal of untouchability work. I found, to my astonishment, that while Mohammedan leaders doing *Tabligh* work openly were allowed to guide the policy of Congress and work as its accredited representatives, those engaged in the work of rescuing Hindu Samaj from disintegration were tabooed and kept out of Congress executive."[3]

Swami Shraddhananda has narrated one more incident in his journal *Liberator*: "As regards the removal of untouchability, it has been authoritatively ruled several times that it is the duty of Hindus to expiate for their past sins and non-Hindus should have nothing to do with it. But the Mohammedan and the Christion Congressmen have openly revolted against this dictum. Even such an unbiased leader as Mr. Yakub Hassan, presiding over a meeting called to present an address to me at Madras, openly enjoined upon Mussalmans the duty of converting all the untouchables in India to Islam."[4]

Rajendra Prasad has frankly exposed the double standards adopted by the critics of Swami Shraddhananda : "The Shuddhi movement of Swami Shraddhananda has come in for a great deal of criticism both from the nationalists and Mussalmans. Whatever one may have to say about its opportuneness as that particular moment, it is difficult to understand how Christians

and Mussalmans can object to it on merits. They are constantly engaged in proselytising mission and converting Hindus to their own faiths. If the Hindus on their side also start converting non-Hindus to their faith, it is no business of non-Hindus, specially if they are themselves engaged in the work of conversion, to object. The Hindus must have the same right of propagating their faith as others have."[5]

The very same Muslims who had welcomed the great Swami inside their Masjid and wildly applauded him at the time of Khilafat, now began to view him as their enemy number one. For, the one thing the Muslim leaders dreaded most was re-conversion. If that movement caught up, not only would the one-thousand-year-old one-way traffic from Hinduism to Islam stop for good but the process could even get reversed. Once their numbers fell, all their dreams of *Dar-ul-Islam* would automatically be shattered. So long as the Hindus themselves had shut their doors to the converts, their (Muslims') position was secure. But now this "dangerous" Swami had opened their portals–which could well prove to be, if allowed to go on unchecked, the undoing of all their designs. So they decided to act.

On 23rd December 1926, Swami Shraddhananda was laid up with illness. A Muslim youth by name Abdul Rashid came to see him. He asked for a glass of water and when the attendant went in, he took out his revolver and shot the Swami four times. Swami Shraddhananda lay dead in the bed in a pool of blood. When Rashid was caught and charge-sheeted, the Muslims collected a large fund for his legal defence. It was Asaf Ali, aprominent member of the Congress, who came forward to defend him. Ultimately, when Rashid was convicted and hanged, over fifty thousand Muslims joined in his funeral procession to offer homage to the assassin who had spilled the blood of a great and saintly religious leader of Hindus. They also recited a special *namaz* for him in the *masjids*. The official party organ of *Jamiat-ul-Ulema* came out with a number of arguments in a pamphlet to honour Rashid as a martyr, *The Times of India* of 30th November 1927 carried the news item: "It is reported that for earning merit for the soul of Abdul Rashid, the murderer of Swami Shraddhananda, in the next world, the students and professors of the famous theological collage of Deoband finished five complete recitations of the Koran and had planned to finish

a daily lakh and a quarter recitations of Koranic verses. Their prayer was 'God Almighty may give the *marhoom* (i.e., Rashid) a place in the a *ala-e-illeeyeen* (the summit of the seventh heaven)"[6].

Gandhiji's reactions to Swami Shraddhananda's murder were also typical . The condolence resolution on the Swami's death was moved by him, and seconded by Mohammed Ali at the Gauhati Congress Session in 1926. Pattabhi Sitaramayya writes: "Gandhi expounded what true religion was and explained the causes that led to the murder: 'Now you will perhaps understand why I have called Abdul Rashid a brother and I repeat it. I do not even regard him as guilty of Swami's murder. Guilty indeed are those who excited feelings of hatred against one another.' "[7]

Gandhiji, who had not assented to put his signature to a petition for saving the lives of Bhagat Singh and others because of their violence, and had also for the same reason called Shivaji, Rana Pratap and Guru Govind Singh as 'misguided patriots', did not, however, look upon Rashid's act in that light.

Lala Nanakchand, a prominent Arya Samajist of Delhi, Rajpal, the supposed author of *Rangila Rasool* – a pamphlet published against Prophet Mohammed as tit-for-tat to a scurrilous pamphlet on Sita – and Nathuramal Sharma were some others who fell victims to the Muslim hymn of hate; and also quite a few other local Hindu leaders at several places.

'Jehad' Unleashed

The frenzy of *jehad* generated by the Khilafat provocation soon spread like wild fire. Beginning in 1922 in a few places in Punjab and Bengal, by 1923 it enveloped many other provinces: at Amritsar, Lahore, Panipat, Multan and some other cities in Punjab, at Moradabad, Meerat, Allahabad, Saharanpur in U.P., at Bhagalpur in Bihar, at Gulbarga in Hyderabad State and at Delhi itself. At most of these places it was the Muslims joining the Moharrum procession who had sparked off the outbreak and given the signal for wide-spread uprising against the Hindus.

Bhai Parmanand, a greatly venerated Hindu leader of Punjab, personally enquired into the Saharanpur riots and reported, 'There is no doubt left in my mind about the key role played,

by the Khilafat leaders in fomenting the orgy of murder, loot and arson of Hindus. It appears certain that the main instigation for the riots raging all over the country has been provided by the Khilafat stir."[8]

Rajendra Prasad has not minced words in pinpointing the Muslim complicity in these riots. "Towards the later part of 1922 there occurred serious riots in Multan in which Hindu places of worship were desecrated, many Hindus were killed and many Hindu houses were looted and burnt. This was the first of a large number of communal riots which continued for several years and which occurred in almost all parts of the country."[9]

Hundreds of Hindu fell vectims to the Muslim barbarism. Countless Hindu women were raped and kidnapped. Practically every Hindu festival – Ramlila, Durga Pooja, Holi, Ganapati, etc., was a signal for a fierce Muslim assault. Gandhiji, giving his reactions through *Young India* in 1924, wrote : "The Hindus have written to me complaining that I was responsible for unifying and awakening the Mussalmans and giving prestige to the Moulvis which they never had before. Now that the Khilafat question was over, the awakened Mussalmans have proclaimed a kind of *jehad* against the Hindu... The tales that are reported from Bengal of outrages upon Hindu women are the most disquieting if they are even half-true... My own experience but confirms the opinion that the Mussalman as a rule is a bully, and the Hindu as a rule is a coward. Need the Hindu blame the Mussalman for his cowardice? Where there are cowards, there will always be bullies. Mussalmans (of Saharanpur) can offer no defence for their execrable conduct. But as a Hindu, I am more ashamed of Hindu cowardice than I am angry at the Mussalman bullying. Why did not the owners of the houses looted die in the attempt to defend their possessions ? Where were the relatives of the outraged sisters at the time of outrage ? My non-violence does not admit running away from danger and leaving the dear ones unprotected."[10]

The Kohat riots from 9th September 1924 onwards deserve special mention, for they sent waves of shudder throughout the country. Pattabhi Sitaramayya wrote: "The Kohat riots really broke the backbone of India." Hindus were just five per cent of the population of Kohat, a small town in N.W.F.P. As many as

150 Hindus were murdered. The entire Hindu population had to seek shelter in Rawalpindi-320 km away. The terrible death dance of murder, rape, loot, abduction, etc., let loose on the Hindus there made Gandhiji, accompanied by Shaukat Ali, visit Rawalpindi. (Permission for Gandhiji's visit to Kohat was refused by the Government.) However, when they reached there, they found that the Muslims of Kohat had not turned up at all. The reports of Gandhiji and Shaukat Ali, prepared after their Rawalpindi visit, presented a strange contrast. While Gandhiji ascribed the riots to the wrath of Muslims cover the resentment of Hindus to the conversion of Hindu men and married women', and found that the 'Muslims had no excuse whatsoever for their furious onslaught on the Hindus', Shaukat Ali repudiated that there were forced conversions and stated that 'the removal of tuft and the use of Muslim caps by Hindus were intended by friendly Muslims to protect Hindus from Muslim mob fury' and held Hindus as much responsible as the Mussalmans for the disturbances.[11]

Riots raging throughout the country had severely shocked Gandhiji. Especially the Kohat tragedy had sorely pricked his conscience. He decided to undertake a 21-day fast. He said: "My hopelessness (which he later on corrected as helplessness) was still more unbearable ... nothing evidently that I say or write can bring the two communities together. And, therefore, I am imposing upon myself (the fast)."

He remarked that things had come to such a pass that the Hindus and Muslims who just two years ago apparently were working together as friends were now fighting like cats and dogs.

During the days of his fast, Mahadev Desai once asked him for what error of his he was undergoing this penance. Gandhiji replied: "My error? Why, I may be charged with having committed a breach of faith with the Hindus. I asked them to lay their lives and property at the disposal of the Mussalmans for the protection of their holy places. Even today I am asking them to practise Ahimsa to settle quarrels by dying but not killing. And what do I find to be the result ? How many sisters came to me with complaints? As I was saying yesterday to Hakimji, Hindu women are in mortal terror of Mussalman goondas. In many places they fear to go out alone. I had a letter from ..... How can I bear the way in which his little children were molested? How can I now

ask the Hindus to put up with everything patiently? I gave them the assurance that the friendship of Mussalmans was bound to bear good fruit. I asked them to befriend them regardless of the result. It is not in my power today to make good that assurance. Who listens to me? And yet I must ask the Hindus even today to die and not to kill."[12]

Pattabhi Sitaramayya writes: "It is a decade since the events of the 9th and 10th September, 1924 occurred, but a perusal of the reports on the Kohat outrages, printed and published for the Kohat Refugees Working Committee, by Lala Nandlal, Head-Master, Bharati School, Kohat, immediately after the riot, sends a thrill of horror through the reader."[13]

The close of the fast was marked by a 'Unity Conference'. But it proved to be just an eyewash. For, on that very day, a fresh bout of riots broke out at Allahabad, Lucknow and other places. The Delhi Muslims refused to accept Gandhiji as the final arbiter. Gandhiji too ultimately confessed in private that the unity talks fell through because of Muslim opposition.

The aggravation of Muslim intransigence as a result of Khilafat was writ large on every word and gesture of Muslim leaders thereafter. Mohammed Ali, addressing his co-religionists in January 1929 at an All Party Muslim Conference, infused them with the "confidence" that in all their religious battles in the past one Muslim had vanquished three *kafirs*.

With the end of Khilafat issue the utility of Congress had exhausted itself for the Ali brothers. They bade goodbye to the Congress. Speaking at the All-India Muslim Conference at Bombay in April 1930, Mohammed Ali said that he refused to join Gandhiji because "his movement is not a movement for the complete independence of India but for making the seventy millions of Indian Mussalmans dependants of the Hindu Mahasabha."

At the 1927 Session of Congress at Madras, Sarojini Naidu, while moving the resolution on "Hindu-Muslim Unity", refered to the opinion of the Muslim leaders in Congress: "They (the Muslim leaders) have further said, 'Give us if you will by such distribution of provinces which will make Sind aseparate province, that will give to Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province the opportunity to develop brotherhood and freedom, with those which Amanullah His Afghan Majesty rules."[14]

During those days, an open challenge often bandied about by the Muslim leaders was "Let there be a Fourth Panipat !" to which Malaviya had retorted "Yes, we accept the challenge."

The eruption of Muslim communal frenzy in the form of Moplah uprising and other riots all over the country helped to remove the blinkers from the eyes of many Hindu leaders. Chittaranjan Das, who was the Congress President at the 1922 Session, confessed openly that Hindu-Muslim unity was an impossibility.

In 1924, Rabindranath Tagore's fears about the divided loyalty of Muslims appeared in *Times of India* (18-4-1924): "A very important factor which is making it almost impossible for Hindu-Muslim unity to become an accomplished fact is that the Muslims cannot confine their patriotism to any one country. I had frankly asked many Muslims whether, in the event of any Mohammedan Power invading India, they would stand side by side with their Hindu neighbours to defend their common land. I was not satisfied with the reply I got from them. I can definitely state that even such men as Mr. Mohammed Ali has declared that under no circumstances is it permissible for any Mohammedan whatever be his country to stand against any Mohammedan."[15]

Dr. Annie Besant was another top leader of the Congress to realise the folly of their Khilafat policy :

" ... since the Khilafat agitation, things have changed and it has been one of the many injuries inflicted on India by the encouragement of the Khilafat crusade, that the inner Muslim feeling of hatred against "unbelivers" has sprung up, naked and unashamed, as in years gone by...

"If India were independent, the Muslim part of the population – for the ignorant masses would follow those who appealed to them in the name of their Prophet – would become an immediate peril to India's freedom. Allying themselves with Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Persia, Iraq, Arabia, Turkey and Egypt and with such of the tribes of Central Asia who are Mussalmans, they would rise to place India under the rule of Islam – those in "British India" being helped by the Muslims in Indian States – and would establish Mussalman rule."[16]

These leaders were only echoing what Gokhale, the liberal figure of Indian politics, was constrained to remark, "The seven

crores of Muslims here have become more or less hostile to our national aspirations."

The Hindu leaders were gravely perturbed over one more aspect of Muslim intransigence. The Muslim leaders were repeatedly claiming that in the event of the quitting of the British either out of sheer exhaustion or disgust, the integrity of India could be safeguarded only by the Muslims. For, they alone could secure the sympathy and support of their trustworthy co-religionists residing beyond the North-Western border. It was in accordance with this conviction and strategy that Muslim leaders including those in the Congress were clamouring for greater recruitment of the hilly people of North-Western Province to the army.

The threat implied in this plan was sending shivers down the spine of many a Hindu leader. The Afghan invasion of the Frontier Province by Amir Amanullah in the spring of 1919, which was however repulsed by the British, was fresh in their minds. In 1924, Lajpat Rai wrote to C. R. Das : "I am not afraid of seven crores (of Muslims) of Hindusthan but I think the seven crores of Hindusthan plus the armed hosts of Afghanistan, Central Asia, Arabia, Mesopotamia and Turkey will be irresistible. I do honestly and sincerly believe in the necessity or desirability of Hindu-Muslim Unity. I am also fully prepared to trust the Muslim leaders, but what about the injunctions of the Quran and Hedis? The leaders cannot override them. Are we then doomed? I hope not. I hope your learned mind and wise head will find some way out of this difficulty."[17]

However, all such voices of reason and caution were simply brushed aside. Whoever dared to utter a word of warning about the dangers of Muslim belligerence was immediately dubbed communal, They no longer had any place in Congress.

Achyut Patwardhan, one of the erstwhile Socialist stalwarts in the Congress, in a remarkably candid and self-critical analysis of the Congress policy vis-a-vis Khilafat, wrote in 1968 :

"It is, however, useful to recognise our share of this error of misdirection. To begin with, I am convinced that looking back upon the course of development of the freedom movement, 'the Himalayan Error' of Gandhiji's leadership was the support he extended on behalf of the Congresss and the Indian people to the Khilafat Movement at the end of the World War I. This has

proved to be a disastrous error which has brought in its wake a series of harmful consequences. On merits, it was a thoroughly reactionary step. The Khilafat was totally unworthy of support of the progressive Muslims. Kemal Pasha established this fact by abolition of the Khilafat. The abolition of the Khilafat was wisely welcomed by enlightened Muslim opinion the world over, and Kemal was an undoubted hero of all young Muslims straining against Imperial domination. But apart from the fact that Khilafat was an unworthy reactionary cause, Mahatma Gandhi had to align himself with a sectarian revivalist Muslim leadership of Muslims and Maulvis. He was thus unwittingly responsible for jettisoning sane, secular, modernist leadership among the Muslims of India and foisting upon the Indian Muslims a theocratic orthodoxy of the Maulvis. Maulana Muhammad Ali's speeches read today appear strangely incoherent and out of tune with the spirit of secular political freedom. The Congress movement which released the forces of religious liberalism and reform among the Hindus, and evoked a rational scientific outlook, placed the Muslims of India under the spell of orthodoxy and religious superstition by their support to the Khilafat leadership. Rationalist leaders like Jinnah were rebuffed by this attitude. This is the background of the phychological rift between Congress and the League."[18]

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11

Soaring Muslim Demands

GANDHIJI had, in order to convert the Khilafat agitation into a massive people's movement, given a call to boycott Assemblies, schools and colleges and courts as part of the 1920 non-co-operation drive against the Government. The first ever elections to the Provincial Assemblies and the Central Assembly were to be held in November in the same year. The Congress and the Khilafat Committee had called upon the people to boycott the elections. The Muslim League remained neutral. In Punjab, the Unionist Party came to power and in Madras the Justice Party. In the rest of the provinces there was no party worth the name to command the confidence of the people. In February 1922, in Chouri Choura near Gorakhpur in U.P., an infuriated mob set fire to a police station burning alive one police inspector and 21 constables. Gandhiji took it as a signal to withdraw the movement. The Government jailed Gandhiji and other leaders, and void stared the Congress in the face.

More Concessions, Yet More Demands

The Lucknow Pact had proved to be a non-starter, for the Muslims had begun to complain that the pact, while giving higher representation to the Muslims in the Hindu-majority provinces, had however reduced the Muslim-majority provinces – Bengal and Punjab – into Muslim-minority provinces in the allotment of seats in the Legislative Councils. It was the British brain which was behind this new 'realisation' of Muslims. The Indian Government itself had in April 1919 pointed out that the Muslim representation had been reduced to 91% of their population in the Punjab and to 76% in Bengal. The Muslim leaders of these two provinces now began insisting for the abrogation of the section in the Lucknow Pact concerning their provinces. The

Hindu Mahasabha leaders – particularly Lala Lajpat Rai of Punjab – stongly opposed it. In 1920 the Muslim League urged the appointment of a Royal Commission to go into the Indians, demand for "full responsible Government while providing for adequate and effective representation of minorities in every province without reducing the majority in any province to a minority or even to an equality, and separate electorate."

The Muslim League's resolution amounted to a policy of 'heads you lose and tails I win' vis-a-vis the Hindu interests. While retaining the over-representation in the Hindu-majority provinces it had sought to abrogate the minority concessions to Hindus in the Muslim-majority provinces.

The Congress was now, as before, obsessed with the problem of Muslims who had drifted further away from them in the wake of Khilafat. To cite an instance, the 1923 elections were round the corner. The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee under the inspireation of C. R. Das, who was also a leader of Swaraj Party, prepared a Hindu-Muslim pact which would ensure separate representation to the Hindus and Muslims in ratio of their respective populations : 60% of district-wise representation to the majority community, reservation of 60% of all new appointments to Muslims till such time as they reached proper representation according to their population, and for Calcutta Corporation 80% reservation for them, guaranteeing 'no-objection' to the religious sacrifice of cow by Muslims and ban on music before mosques. The A.I.C.C. however rejected the pact by 678 to 458 votes. It is instructive to note here that many of the 678 opposers had not opposed the contents of that resolution, they just did not want it to be on record, in black and white. The discussion and the voting pattern amply demonstrated the enormous extent to which most of its leaders were mentally prepared to go to pamper the Muslims.

Maulana Azad has highly commended the 'political realism' of C.R. Das saying, "... the Swaraj Party won a large following in the Central as well as the Provincial Legislatures. Perhaps its most remarkable achievement was its success in capturing seats reserved for Muslims. This was largely due to the political realism of Mr. Das... His attitude made a great impression on the Mussalmans in Bengal and outside. I am convinced that if he had not died a premature death, he would have created a new

atmosphere in the country. It is a matter for regret that after he died, some of his followers assailed his position and his declaration was repudiated. The result was that the Muslims of Bengal moved away from the Congress and the first seeds of partition were sown."[1]

During the course of his encomiums to C. R. Das, Azad has also *inter alia* stated, "The way he solved the communal problem of Bengal is memorable and should serve as an example even today" (The book was published in 1959). How strange that Azad should have extolled the advisability of the same approach 'even today' – i.e., even after the advent of independence !

The British were again at their old game. The Secretary of State for India, Birkenhead, stated on 7 July 1925: "To talk of India as an entiy is as absurd as to talk of Europe as an entity. Yet the very nationalist spirit which has created most of our difficulties in the last few years is based upon the aspirations and claims of a nationalist India. There never has been such a nation. Whether there ever will be such a nation the future alone can show."

And towards the close of a long speech, he threw out a challenge :

"But if our critics in India are of opinion that their greater knowledge of Indian conditions qualifies them to succeed, where they tell us that we have failed, let them produce a constitution which carries behind it a fair measure of general agreement among the great people of India. Such a contribution to our problems would nowhere be resented. It would, on the contray, be most carefully examined by the Government of India."[2]

The British followed up their statement by sending a Commission headed by Sir John Simon in November 1927. All parties in Bharat, including the Congress and the Muslim League, boycotted the Commission as it did not include a single Indian member. However, the Congress continued its exercises. In 1926, the Congress Working Committee was charged with the task of 'devising measures for the removal of the deplorable differences between Hindus and Muslims.'

From '4 Points' to '14 Points'

The Muslims, sensing the mood of the Congress, decided to

act fast. In March 1927, 30 prominent Muslim leaders met under the presidentship of Jinnah. They agreed to give up separate electorates and opt for joint electorates with reservation of seats provided (1) Sind is separated from Bombay, and constituted as a separate province; (2) the N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan are upgraded into full-fledged Governor's provinces; (3) in the Punjab and Bengal, representation is accorded proportionate to the population, i.e., ensuring absolute statutory majortty for Muslims in these two provinces; (4) in the Central Legislature, the Mohammedans will not be less than one-third of the total strength.

The Congress literally jumped at this opportunity of shaking hands with the Muslims. The Lucknow Pact had, by that time, become defunct and a new 'initiative' had to be displayed by the Congress. In 1927, the Congress, endorsed *in toto* the 4-Point Proposals of the Muslim Conference. The Congress also included in its resolution the other Muslim demands put forth in previous years.

The Congress zealously followed up its resolution by calling an All-Party Conference at Delhi in February 1928. A Sub-Committee was formed with Motilal Nehru as its Chairman. It was assigned the task of formulating a 'Swaraj Constitution'. That document became the famous 'Nehru Report'. The Report had endorsed all the main proposals of the Muslim leaders, conference. However, an amendment by Jinnah urging one-third representation for Muslims at the Centre and investing the provinces with residuary powers was voted down.

The Congress attempt proved once again 'the wild-goose chase'. Though it had failed and Jinnah had boycotted, the Congress had conceded and the Muslims had gained, a crucial point – the separation of Sind from Bombay. So long as Sind remained a part of Bombay, Hindus would outnumber the Muslims in the province. And in the event of the quitting of the British, Sind would continue to remain a part of a Hindu-majority province. The Muslims could not then claim it as a separate Muslim province. So also, the upgrading of N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan from being centrally administered areas into governor's provinces having elected ministries was intended to convert them into full-fledged Muslim provinces. All these were conceded in principle by the Congress even without an

agreement. The Muslims had gained, without losing anything in return, some of their crucial demands.

The Congress had grievously blundered in singling out Sind for formation into a separate province. Most of the British provinces existing then were unwieldy and needed to be divided into more provinces from the administrative point of view. The Congress ought to have demanded reorganisation of provinces of a rational basis and opposed the formation of a province on a communal basis.

The Hindu Mahasabha sensed the danger inherent in the Congress acceptance of separation of Sind. Its resolution on Sind said that "administrative, financial and similar considerations" should be the deciding factors for consituting a territory into a separate province, and not the consideration that a particular community should be in majority – a consideration which is fraught with danger to the growth of sound nationalism in the country, and will divide India into Hindu India and Muslim India."

The Mahasabha also raised its voice against separate electorates and demanded the introduction of joint electorates. It further demanded that reservation for the majority be given up and only the minority community be allowed that concession for a limited period. Communal representation in public services, it said, should also go and selections for the services be made on the basis of merit and competency ascertained through open competitive tests.

The Muslim leaders now came forward with a counter-move to the Nehru Report in the form of an All Party Muslim Conference on 31 December 1928 in Delhi. Some 'nationalist Muslims' also had joined the deliberations there. Aga Khan was in the chair and true to his tradition, he said that India needed the British to protect her integrity and prayed for their dominant role in the governance of India for ever. He also proclaimed that the Muslims were not a mere community but, in a special sense, a nation by themselves. The Conference dubbed the Nehru Report as Hindu proposals to counter the Muslim proposals. It then produced a new formula – which came to be known as 'Jinnah's Fourteen Points'. These 14 Points, while incorporating all their previous demands made so far, had included new demands like (1) Constitution should be federal, with the

provinces enjoying a measure of autonomy and the residuary powers; (2) proportion of Muslims in any Cabinet – whether Central or Provincial – to be not less than one-third; (3) no territorial redistribution of Punjab, Bengal and N. W. F. Province to be undertaken which would adversely affect their Muslim majority. The Conference repudiated the proposal for joint electorates in the Nehru Report and again reverted to separate Electorates.

1930: Declarations of Nehru and Iqbal

In 1930, Mohammed Iqbal came forward, as the President of the Muslim League, to demand an independent sovereign Muslim state, and provided the philosophical basis for such an Islamic state. Aziz Ahmad, a noted Muslim scholar, says: "The way out of this *cul-de-sac* of safeguards and weightages (flowing out of the Muslims considering themselves to be a minority community) was blasted by the romantic imagination of a poet, Sir Mohammed Iqbal ... The religious order of Islam, he argued, is organically related to the social order which it has created. The rejection of the one will eventually involve the rejection of the other. Therefore, the construction of a polity on Indian national lines, if it means displacement of the Islamic principle of solidarity, is simply unthinkable to a Muslim."[3]

Iqbal asserted: "The Muslim would never accept a position in which he would have to sacrifice his unified Islamic identity at the altar of national identity". Iqbal concluded his speech by saying, "I would like to see the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state. Self-government within the British Empire or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims at least of the North-Western India."

Referring to Iqbal's speech, Khaliquzzaman Says: "It is a wonder that when this clarion call was made from the Muslim League platform no one took any notice of it and no one moved any resolution in the session approving the scheme enunciated at Allahabad."[4]

As chance would have it, it was in the same year 1930, that the Congress presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru adopted the historic resolution of Complete Independence, However, the

resolution damaged the cause of the territorial integrity of the country by incorporating the assurance to the so-called minorities like Muslims, Sikhs and others that "no solution thereof in any future constitution will be acceptable to the Congress that does not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned." This assurance was no less than granting the power of veto to the 'minorities.'

Congress declined the offer of Dominion Status – an offer which was left vague and nebulous – made by the British and decided to launch upon its second nation-wide non-co-operation struggle. Boycott of the ensuing Round Table Conference to be held at London, and boycott of Legislature and non-co-operation were announced. The year 1930 saw Gandhiji in historic Dandi march – the Salt Satyagraha and the detention of Congress leaders including Gandhiji by the Government. However, the detention of Congress leaders was short-lived. For, the previous Round Table Conference had proved abortive because of the Congress boycott. The Congress participation, the British felt, had therefore to be ensured at least in the next Conference. Release of Gandhiji, Gandhi-Irwin Pact, release of all political detenus, withdrawal of the non-co-operation movement by the Congress and its decision to participate in the next Round Table Conference – all these followed in quick succession.

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12

Communal Award

THE CONGRESS deputed Gandhiji as its sole representative at the Round Table Conference. Gandhiji was keen on taking Dr. Ansari with him to the Conference, but the Muslim group was dead set against allowing a 'Muslim nationalist' to be nominated by the Government. The British had already made up their minds to frustrate the attempts of Gandhiji for any amicable agreement with the Muslim representatives. They had, out of all Muslim leaders, picked up Aga Khan as the spokesman of Muslims with whom Gandhiji was expected to negotiate and thrash out an agreement. Further, the British had made the 'communal question' more complex by adding on the claims of Sikhs, Depressed Classes, Indian Christians, Europeans and Anglo-Indians along with those of Muslims. Some of these groups went to the extent of even opposing the basic demand of the Congress for transfer of power.

Round Table Conference Fails - British Complicity

The net result of the whole exercise was a big zero – from the point of view of the Congress. Gandhiji issued a statement that he had failed to evolve a consensus formula acceptable to all. But the British had some other motives up their sleeves. In line with that, Aga Khan went ahead in arranging negotiations between the representatives of the above-mentioned five groups – leaving Gandhiji behind – and announced an 'unanimous agreement'. Claiming that they together formed 46 per cent of the total population, they demanded a statutory majority of seats in all the provincial legislatures and also at the centre, and fixed their respective quotas in the proposed Indian Constitutional Reforms. This notorious Minorities Agreement was praised to the skies by the Tory press of London. *The Times* described it

as "an outline of a Bill of Minority Rights which represents the claims jointly and severally put forward by the representatives of over a third of the population of British India."[1]

Edward Benthall, commercial representative for India on the Round Table Conference and his loyalist followers had, after the Conference, issued a confidential circular which revealed the Muslim collaboration with the opponents of India's freedom :

"The Muslims were a solid and enthusiastic team. Ali Imam, the nationalist Muslim, caused no division. They played their cards with great skill throughout ; they promised us support and they gave it in full meassure. In return they asked us that we should not forget their economic plight in Bengal and we should 'without pampering them' do what we can to find places for them in European firms...We had made up our minds that the fight with the Congress was inevitable; ... that for a crushing success we should have all possible friends on our side. The Muslims were all right; the Minorities pact and Government's general attitude ensured that. So were the Princes and the Minorities ... The Muslims have become firm allies of the Europeans. They are very satisfied with their own position and are prepared to work with us."[2]

Edward Thompson wrote : "During the Round Table Conference there was rather an obvious understanding and alliance between the more intransigent Moslems and certain particularly undemocratic British political circles. That alliance is constantly asserted in India to be the real block to progress.

"I believe I could prove that this is largely true. And there is no question that in former times we frankly practised 'divide and rule' method in India. From Warren Hastins's time onwards, men made no bones of the pleasure the Hindu-Muslim conflict gave them; even such men as Elphinstone and Malcolm and Metcalfe admitted its value to the British."[3]

More light was shed later on, on the motivation of Aga Khan for his enthusiastic part in the high drama at London. Pattabhi Sitaramayya writes :

"The recent revelations in the Legislative Assembly about the demand of H. H. the Aga Khan to be made a Ruling Prince of some territory in India, as a reward for his services at the R. T. C., throw much lurid light on these transactions."[4]

It was at this R. T. C. that the word 'Pakistan' went round

for the first time. Its authors were one Chowdhary Rehmat Ali and three other Cambridge Muslim students, who circulated a pamphlet 'Now or Never'. They had coined the word PAKISTAN with *P* standing for Punjab, *A* for Afghanistan, *K* for Kashmir, *S* for Sind and *Tan* for Baluchistan. Certain disclosures point out the hidden hand of British officials behind this move. Writes Husain B. Tyabji: "He (Rehmat Ali) has issued to the 'Millat of his Mission' "Seven Commandments of Destiny for the Seventh Continent of Dinia", for India is to become the Dinia of the future. They are published by the 'Pakistan National Movement", at 16 Montagu Road, Cambridge. The major principles of the Seven Commandments are 'Avoid Minorityism,' 'Avow Nationalism,' 'Acquire Proportional Territory,' 'Consolidate the Individual Nations,' 'Convert India into Dinia'. It is suspected that this really is the scheme of other designers only professing to be friends of Islam.

"In 1933, at a meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Select Committee, when a deputation representing the All-India Muslim League of which the President then was Sir Muhammad Iqbal, and the All-India Conference of which the President was His Highness the Aga Khan, Sir Reginald Craddock inquired of the Delegates what the Pakistan scheme was. When Mr. Abdulla Yusuf Ali, I.C.S., Sir Zaffrulla Khan, and others ridiculed it as a 'chimerical,' 'impracticable,' and 'irresponsible' 'scheme of a student,' Sir Reginald Craddock said: 'You advance very quickly in India, and it may be when those students grow up it will be put forward.'[5]

Blatantly Anti-National Award

On 16 April 1932 the Prime Minister of Britain, Ramsay Macdonald, declared that in view of the failure of the various parties and communities to reach any agreed proposals, the Government itself had to intervene, and accordingly he was announcing the 'Communal Award'. The Award accorded separate electorates to Muslims, Europeans, Sikhs, Indian Christians and Anglo-Indians. In Addition to these groups, Depressed Classes were also granted separate electorates.

The Communal Award had included the pernicious doctrine of weightage – markedly increasing the representation of Muslims in the Provincial Legislatures over and above their

population-percentage in all the Hindu-majority provinces, i.e., Madras, Bombay, U.P., C.P., Assam, Bihar and Orissa. Secondly, the Muslims were assured of statutory majority as against the Hindus in Punjab and Bengal. The Award had met practically all the demands in 'Jinnah's 14 Points' which even the Simon Commission had criticised as unjust.

M.A. Karandikar writes: "The Communal Award was, in a way, a declaration by His Majesty's Government that it did not consider any community other than Muslims as of any political importance. Almost all the demands made by the Muslim delegation at the Round Table Conference were conceded; separate communal electorates, weightages, limited franchise instead of adult franchise, denial of full Central responsibility, denial of joint electorates to the minorities even in the Muslim-majority provinces, carving out of three additional Muslim-majority provinces of Sind, N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan, subvention to Sind and N.W.F.P. from the Central treasury, safeguarding of the interests of the 'Haves' such as landholders, a predominant position in the Punjab and Bengal, etc. By a supplementary communal award in December of the same year, the British Government conceded the remaining demand of 33½ per cent representation at the Central Legislature."[6]

Ambedkar has pinpointed the gnawing inequity in the Award.

The Communal Award, according to Ambedkar, was iniquitous in as much as it accorded unequal treatment to the Hindu and Muslim minorities in the matter of electorates: "It grants the Muslim minorities in the Hindu Provinces the right of self-determination in the matter of electorates, but it does not grant the same right to the Hindu minorities in the Muslim Provinces. In the Hindu Provinces, the Muslim minority is allowed to choose the kind of electorates it wants and the Hindu majority is not permitted to have any say in the matter. But in the Muslim Provinces, it is the Muslim majority which is allowed to choose the kind of electorates it prefers and the Hindu minority is not permitted to have any say in the matter. Thus, the Muslims in the Muslim Provinces having been given both statutory majority (in relation to Hindus) and separate electorates, the Communal Award must be said to impose upon the Hindu minorities Muslim rule, which they can neither alter nor influence."[7]

The Muslims, however, continued with their grouse that their demand for an absolute statutory majority in Bengal and Punjab had not been met. But factually it was the Hindus who had suffered most. This is how Rajendra Prasad has analysed the effect of the Award on the Hindu interests vis-a-vis the others: "In Bengal the Hindus were in the minority of 44.8 per cent of the total population. They were given only 80 out of 250 seats, i.e., only 32 per cent of the total. The Mussalmans who were 54.8 per cent of the population were given 119 seats, i.e., 47.6 per cent of total. The Europeans who were 0.01 per cent of the population were given 25 seats, i.e., 10 per cent of the total number of seats. It will thus appear that the Mussalmans who were in a majority were reduced to a minority in the representation and the Hindus who were in a minority were deprived even of their due proportion – in order to give a very heavy weightage of 2,50,000 times to the Europeans. What is noteworthy is that although the representation of both Muslims and Hindus was reduced, the cut was greater in the Hindu representation. In other words, unlike other provinces, weightage was given to the smallest community not out of the majority community alone but out of another minority which was required not only to give up any weightage which it might feel entitled to as a minority, but also to make a greater sacrifice proportionately than the majority community. In the Punjab also, to give weightage to the Sikhs the Hindus were required to give up a portion of their representation, although they were in a minority and would be entitled to weightage according to ordinary canons of fairness and justice."[8]

The Congress 'Neither Accepts nor Rejects' the Award

The Communal Award evoked a spontaneous outburst of denunciation by all national leaders as highly unjust and discriminatory to Hindus.

Gandhiji described it as highly anti-national and grossly unjust to the Hindus. Pandit Nehru said: "The Communal Award is an utter negation of nationalism and is meant to divide Hindusthan into communal compartments and give strength to disruptive tendencies and thus to strengthen the hold of British Imperialism." In a moving letter to Pandit Malaviya, Rabindranath Tagore urged him to see that the Award was not given effect

to at any cost. In view of the storm of opposition raised all over the country, the feeling was widespread that the Congress would reject it out of hand. The British too, sensing the mood of the nation, moved quickly and deftly. The Secretary of State for India, Samuel Hoare, tutored Aga Khan to so manage that the Congress did not oppose the Award. Otherwise, he warned, the whole plan would flop. Aga Khan and Jinnah, then at London, wired to Dr. M. A. Ansari urging him to persuade the Congress to accept the Award in the interest of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Dr. Ansari's immediate reaction to the Award had been one of strong resentment. In a joint statement Dr. Ansari and Sherwani had stated: "Perpetuating and stimulating the cause of dividing Indians, accentuation and extension of communal division and creation of fresh communal groups and interests which would shatter all futures prospects of communal co-operation, these are the main features of the 'Communal Award'." Later on, Dr. Ansari had even gone to the length of describing the Communal Award as a 'cup of poison.'[9]

But after receiving the communication from London, Dr. Ansari softened and kept mum. The sea change brought about in Dr. Ansari's attitude was typical; it reflected how the 'nationalist Muslims' in the Congress camp were being dragged along the League's communal and separatist line. In his impassioned appeal to the Muslims to accept the 'Nehru Report' in 1927, Dr. Ansari had depicted the perils befalling the minorities from special concessions. Quoting from the report of a Committee of League of Nations he had said, "The true safeguard of a minority is the goodwill of the majority" and added that the status and welfare of a minority depended not on "wringing privileges from the majority," but on its "patriotism, public spirit and devotion to the country." He held that constitutional safeguards were "bounties on inefficiency" and pointed out that "the more a minority has them, the more will it need; and protected from the bracing spirit of free competition by the charitable provisions of the constitution, it will sink deeper and deeper into ignorance, fanaticism and sloth to be stifled ultimately by those who had adhered to offer it a partial support."[10]

The Congress was now beset – for the umpteenth time – with the same predicament. On the one hand was the outrageous

anti-national imperialist design in the form of Communal Award striking at the basic unity of the nation. On the other was the apprehension of losing the Muslim support. And for the umpteenth time the Congress wavered. But thinking it to be impolitic to express its non-rejection in so many words, it declared that it 'neither accepts nor rejects' the Award. Though the words appeared to be ambivalent, its import was clear : the Congress would not oppose the Award. As the Sanskrit adage goes – *Mounam* [*sammati-lakshanam*–silence implied acquiescence. The British – League conspiracy had triumphed once again.

Malaviya came out of the Congress in protest and formed the Congress Nationalist Party. He along with Bapuji Aney of Nagpur undertook a whirlwind tour of the country to build up public opinion against the Award. Bhai Parmanand was another stalwart who bitterly opposed the Award in the Central Assembly.

'Engine of Communal Tyranny'

The Communal Award had presented one more valuable gift to Muslims – to separation of Sind from Bombay and its formation into a full-fledged separate Muslim-majority province. By then, already, assaults on Hindus in Sind were becoming more and more frequent and virulent. Several Hindu deputations had waited on Gandhiji pleading with him that separation of Sind from Bombay would amount to throwing the Hindus there into the den of Muslim fanaticism. However, the Congress had already, in its Karachi Session of 1931, accepted the Muslim demand regarding Sind and had, as a preamble to its resolution, upheld 'the rights of a minority to protect and develop its language, script, culture, education, etc.

When somebody queried Gandhiji why he was not working for reamalgamation of Sind with Bombay since the Hindus being a minority in the Sind province were being savagely ill-treated, Gandhiji replied :

"As for Sind, my advice stands. Reincorporation of Sind in the Bombay Province may or may not be a good proposition on other grounds, but certainly it is not for the purpose of greater protection of life and property. Every Indian, be he Hindu or any other, must learn the art of protecting himself. It is the condition of real democracy. The State has a duty ; but

no State can protect those who will not share with it the duty of protecting themselves."[11]

However, it passes one's imagination how Gandhiji's advice to Hindus could have been possibly adhered to by them in the context of Sind. How could they have shared 'their duty with a Government' which together with 70% of Muslim population was bent on harassing them ?

Regarding the constitution of a separate Sind province and granting of the status of Governor's Province to N.W.F. Province included in the Award, Dr. Ambedkar laid bare the motive behind the scheme for creating more Muslim provinces :

"That this scheme of Communal Provinces, which constitutes the Communal Question in its larger intent, can be used as an engine of communal tyranny, there can be no doubt. The system of hostages, which is the essence of the scheme of Communal Provinces, supported by separate electorates, is indeed insupportable on any ground. If this is the underlying motive of the demand for the creation of more Muslim provinces, the system resulting from it is undoubtadly a vicious system.

"This analysis leaves no doubt that the communal statutory majority based on separate communal electorates and the communal provinces, especially constituted to enable the statutory majority to tyrannize the minority, are the two evils which compose what is called 'the Communal Problem.' "[12]

The Communal Award had also met the Muslim demand for the federal structure of the Constitution implying that the residuary powers should not be vested in the Centre which, in other words, meant in the hands of Hindus. The residuary power was vested in the hands of the Governor General to be exercised in his discretion for safeguarding the minority interests.'

Bid to Break Up Hindu Society

The Communal Award contained one more factor – a veritable dynamite intended to blow up the unity of Hindu society from within. And that was the grant of separate electorates to the Depressed Classes, just as for Muslims. In this respect too, the joint British-Muslim conspiracy had been at work since a long time. It was to chop off a big chunk of Hindus from the parent society, so that the Muslims could claim a higher ratio of population and therefore of higher representation vis-a-vis the

Hindus. This was evident from the petitions submitted by Ameer Ali, as the leader of Muslim League delegation, to Morley in 1909 in London in which Ameer Ali argued: "If the vast masses of low caste people who are nominally Hindus were excluded from the Hindu figures, certainly the disparity which now appears between the Hindus and Mohammedan populations would not strike as so great or disproportionate. These tribes and communities, nominally Hindu for the purposes of Census, have nothing in common with the real Hindu, to whom their touch, often their very shadow, is pollution. To include these communities, however, in the Hindu population, and then to compare it with the Mohammedan population, does not appear to us just."[13]

The constant refrain thereafter of Muslim leaders in their representations to the British was that it was sheer injustice and cruelty to leave the fate of untouchables in the hands of Hindu representatives; the untouchables could find greater security and honour in the Islamic brotherhood than in the Hindu society; considering them also as Hindus would only result in tilting the proportion of Hindu and Muslim representations in favour of the former.

The motive underlying this logic was obvious. First, to slice off about a third of Hindu population and draw them into the Islamic fold. Secondly, to establish that Muslims were equal to Hindus in numbers, and then claim a greater share of power. Thirdly, to sow seeds of internal dissension and disruption among Hindus, and weaken them so that they could be browbeaten into Islamic submission.

Gandhiji Stakes His Life

However, Gandhiji had made it plan at the R.T.C. that he would even stake his life to stall any attempt at granting separate electorates to the Depressed Classes which would have driven a wedge between them and the rest of the Hindu society. Gandhiji was in the Yerwada Prison at the time the Communal Award was announced. Immediately, he declared an indefinite fast.

The whole country was shaken. Hectic activities of leaders of various parties and groups started. Dr. Ambedkar, the leader of the Depressed Classes, was persuaded to arrive at a com-

promise. As a result, the Poona Pact was signed and the British Government was left with no other course except accepting it and dropping that pernicious clause in the Award.

The Poona Pact had accorded a far greater share of reservation for the Depressed Classes in place of separate electorates. They now secured 148 seats as against 81 granted under the Communal Award. However, the saving factor was that the Depressed Class members were to be elected from mixed joint constituencies and as such there was a natural check on the possible aggravation of separatist tendencies among them. Gandhiji had by this step undoubtedly saved the Hindu society from becoming a house divided against itself, with a sizable section cut off and pitted against the parent society.

A subtle question is bound to arise in our mind as to why Gandhiji, who was so rock-like in his resolve with regard to a section of Hindu society, did not display a similar attitude in the case of Muslims. On the contrary, Gandhiji adopted a soft line of greater and ever greater concessions to Muslims. Could it indicate an unconscious background in his mind of the Muslims' being essentially distinct from our national stock? And that they were not amenable to moral appeals such as fast and that there was no alternative except appeasement to win them over?

In this connection, the reply given by Gandhiji to the following question gives us a clue to his thinking. "Have you ever inquired as to why, while the Muslim community in India as a whole is so keenly interested in the affairs of Muslim countries abroad, not the least appreciable proportion of it takes any active interest in the internal political life and advancement of the country....?

"In so far as the charge is correct, the Mussalmans take less interest because they do not yet regard India as their home of which they must feel proud. Many regard themselves, quite wrongly, I think, as belonging to a race of conquerors."[14]

The Communal Award had proved to be a windfall to the Muslims and acclaimed as such by all their leaders. Fazli Hussain had circulated a letter saying that the Prime Minister's announcement had given seats far exceeding their expectations. This measure would, he said put a strong check on the Mahasabha, Sikh, Congress and the Liberals.

In those days, Dr. K.B. Hedgewar, the founder of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, was sounding a grim note of warning in all his public utterances that the poisonous seed of separatism in the form of Communal Award would sooner or later result in the partition of the country.

That the fears of Dr. Hedgewar were real enough was borne out by J. Coatman who was in the Imperial Police for 17 years. He reflected the British thinking in the wake of the Round Table Conference in 1930-31, when he wrote : "The creation of a strong, United India, including the whole of British India and the Indian States and the borderland in the north-west, whose inclusion in India is one of the first and most fundamental conditions of her nationhood, is day by day being made impossible and in its place it seems that there may be brought into being a powerful Muhammadan State in the north and north-west with its eyes definitely turned away from India towards the rest of the Moslem world of which it forms the fringe. ..."[15]

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13

Gangster Style Rewards the League

BY THEIR Communal Award the British had gone far ahead of the Congress in wooing the Muslims. The Congress must have naturally felt piqued and left behind in the race. It soon began making amends and started a fresh round of talks and negotiations. The result was a Unity Conference of all parties held at Allahabad in November 1932.

This new formula envisaged the important concession claimed by the Muslims for long – i.e., absolute statutory majority for Muslims in Punjab and Bengal, along with an increase in their quota at the Centre to 32%, over which the Lucknow Pact was silent. All the other concessions already granted by the Congress to the Muslims till then were also intact. All this was in lieu of their giving up of separate electorates – a welcome step indeed.

But even before the Committee had concluded its efforts and all could heave a sigh of relief at 'the long awaited happy outcome of Hindu-Muslim negotiations', the Secretary of State, Samuel Hoare, announced a 33⅓ per cent of seats for Muslims in Central Legislature and constitution of Sind into a separate province and provision of adequate finances to it, in addition to the already existing separate electorates. As a result, when the Unity Conference assembled again, the Muslim delegates placed their bid higher than what the Government had accorded to them. And all the 'love's labour' of the Conference was lost! This provided one more case of both the bidders – the British and the Congress – each trying to outbid the other in purchasing the Muslim support and in the process enhancing its price.

The 1935 Act of India incorporated all the provisions of the Communal Award and the subsequent concessions announced by Hoare. Something more also. The Muslims got 25% of seats

reserved in public services. The residual powers in the hands of the Governor General were to be used to see that the minority interests were not trampled upon by the 'brute' majority. The Government had also, with a view to allaying the 'fears' of Muslims, assured them that they would not modify the articles of the Award without the positive concurrence of the parties concerned.

1937 Elections: Congress Sweeps, League Slumps

Elections were announced for the Provincial Assemblies in the beginning of 1937. The Congress which had 'neither accepted nor rejected' the Communal Award did not, however, suffer from any mental inhibitions in participating in the elections held on that very basis. The results, as were to be expected, went in favour of the Congress in all the Hindu-majority provinces. While it secured a clear majority in Madras, U.P., Bihar, C. P. and Orissa, it got just half the seats in Bombay and emerged as the biggest single party in Assam and N.W.F. Province. In Bengal the Krishik Praja Party led by Fazlul Huq rose to power while in Punjab the Unionist Party of Sikandar Hayat Khan formed the ministry. The Muslim League was left lagging behind even in Muslim constituencies – with a tally of just 108 seats out of a total of 485.

However, the League's chief discomfiture did not lie merely in its low performance in winning seats. It had been virtually washed out in N.W.F. Province, with not a single seat to its credit. Punjab which was to be the bulwark of future Pakistan returned but one Leaguer. In Sind, with a Muslim population of 70%, Leaguers were just 3 in a House of 60. And in Bengal – the eastern wing of prospective Pakistan – its tally was 37 out of a total of 117 Muslim seats. In contrast, the League could muster Muslim support in Hindu-majority provinces. In Bombay it secured 20 out of 29 Muslims seats; in U. P. it was 27 out of 64 and in Madras 10 out of 28; which only brought out the irony of the situation – the party which was to be the chief instrument for carving out Pakistan evoked but a negligible response to its separatist appeal in those very areas which were to form parts of Pakistan, while the areas which were to remain in Bharat even after partition proved to be its mainstay.

Sikandar Hayat Khan of Punjab was an arch opponent

of the idea of a separate state for Muslims. He had, on a subsequent occasion, denounced the concept of Pakistan as equivalent to genocide. In both Punjab and Bengal, Muslims and Hindus had joined hands in forming ministries.

The Congress which had contested 58 Muslim seats (out of a total of 485) got through only in 26. It formed coalition ministries in N.W.F. Province and Assam, in addition to its own full-fledged ministries in provinces where it had secured a clear majority.

The results of the elections had brought into bold relief a striking feature of the Indian political situation obtaining then, i.e., the pre-eminent position held by the Congress in contrast to the extremely feeble condition of the Muslim League. The Muslims, by and large, had neither supported the League nor, much less, the Congress. They had preferred the local and provincial parties and independents.

The low tide of League's appeal is described by Khaliquzzaman: "... there was a great danger of the rising tide of Muslim enthusiasm receding and their falling into despondency; particularly we had not at the time framed any specific demand which we could place before our people or the Government, in a language which our own people and those of the world could understand."[1] "...there was a regrettable confusion in the Muslim ranks which was ever increasing in proportion to the awakening of the Hindu mass-consciousness on the one side and the growing weakness of the British administration on the other....The Muslims outside were so hopelessy divided between themselves that there appeared no chance of a joint effort to present a united front, in the central or the provincial legislatures, through a well-knit party."[2]

The Congress was placed in such a position that, if only it had used the advantage with skill and determination, it could have contained the growing threat of separatism by the Muslim League and thwarted its plans for mobilising the entire Muslim community under its single banner. But even here, as future developments will reveal, the Congress fumbled, for lack of will and direction, and the League succeeded in browbeating it at every stage.

There was, for example, a strong feeling that the way the Congress went about forming its own ministry after the elections

in U.P. paved the way for the confrontation of the League with the Congress and barred all venues of co-operation. The Congress had fought the elections with a clear – though undeclared – understanding with the League that the two of them together would form a coalition ministry after the elections. However, when the Congress got an absolute majority on its own, it went back on the understanding. The League felt cheated and its suspicions about the Congress bonafides became acute. The U.P. League leader Khaliquzzaman stormed the province with the slogan "If we cannot rule together, we cannot live together."

Metamorphosis of Jinnah

Jinnah who had by now assumed the unchallenged leadership of the Muslim League and was treated as the de-facto all-India representative of Muslims by the Government and even the Congress, was all set to enter the political arena in a big way. As such it would be useful to draw a brief sketch of his dominant traits and convictions in the early days of his political career and the why and how of their subsequent transformation.

To Jinnah, Islam held no fascination as a religion, nor could he be by any stretch of imagination called religious. In his youth he was called Jinnabhai in the Gujarati style. When he was the President of the Home Rule League, he side that be belonged to a sect in Islam which believed in the Ten Incarnations of the Hindus and that his sect had inherited for the most part the same social customs and property rights as those prevalent in Hindu society. He hated bigotry and abhorred the *mullahs,* its champions. He once told Pt. Motilal Nehru, another ardent secularist, that he believed in "none of their nonsense" although he had somehow "to carry these fools along."[3] Dr. Ambedkar, highlighting this aspect of Jinnah, has said that "he was never known to be a very devout, pious or a professing Muslim. Besides kissing the Holy Quran as and when he was sworn in as an M.L.A., he does not appear to have bothered much about its contents or its special tentes. It is doubtful if he frequented any mosque either out of curiosity or religious fervour. Mr. Jinnah was never found in the midst of Muslim mass congregations, religious or political."[4] Jinnah's knowledge of Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages was next to nil.

Jinnah often said with pride that he had learnt his lessons

in politics sitting at the feet of Surendranath Banerjea. Gokhale had once expressed very high hopes about him: "He (Jinnah) has true stuff in him, and that freedom from all sectarian prejudice which will make him the best ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity."[5] Jinnah had publicly arraigned the Government for their rude and insulting behaviour towards Tilak in connection with the War Conference at Delhi in 1920. He had also defended Tilak in the Bombay High Court in the historic sedition case against the latter.

Jinnah, even when he joined the Muslim League, had affirmed in no uncertain terms his 'first loyalty' to the national cause. Sarojini Naidu writes : "Jinnah formally enrolled himself as a member of the All-India Muslim League. Typical of his exquisite, if somewhat exigent sense of humour, is it to find that even so simple an incident partook of somewhat like a sacrament. His two sponsors were required to make a solemn preliminary covenant that loyalty to the Muslim League and the Muslim interest would in no way and at no time imply even the shadow of disloyalty to the larger national cause, to which his life was dedicated."[6]

In line with his total commitment to nationalism, he became a devoted disciple of Lokmanya Tilak. In 1919, while giving evidence before the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on the Government of India Reform Bill, he had upheld the same stand : that he was speaking as a nationalist Indian, that he firmly believed that the separate communal representation for Muslims should go at the earliest date, that it would bring him the greatest happiness to see the differences between Hindus and Mussalmans in the national life erased as early as possible. He also pointed out that during "the Muslim League session at Agra in 1913, 40 out of 120 delegates had voted against continuation of separate electorates and that he was confident that during the course of the next enquiry, a majority of Muslim delegates would press for joint electorates."[7]

We have already seen how because of his nationalist temperament, he had opposed the Khilafat agitation. Jinnah being a sophisticated secular-minded gentleman was inclined to constitutional methods. This is what made him an opponent of the non-co-operation movement launched by Gandhiji in 1920, involving an open challenge to established authority.

But now Jinnah was in a fix. On the one side was the phenomenal growth in the popularity of Congress and Gandhiji, where he found no place because of his conviction in constitutional methods. Congress had helped to project rabidly communal and separatist and fanatic Muslims as leaders of that community and brushed aside nationalist-minded persons like Jinnah. On the other side, Muslims were getting more and more estranged from the Hindus resulting in the Muslim League taking a more rabidly separatist line.

For a long time the Muslim League itself was split into two and remained in a moribund state, one of the sections being led by Jinnah. At every step Jinnah's personal nationalist views would come into conflict with the prevailing Muslim mass urges. Caught on the horns of this dilemma, Jinnnh could not play any effective role at either of the two Round Table Conferences at London. His was the unenviable condition of Trishanku of the Hindu mythology. It was in this mood that Jinnah went into political exile for some time and stayed in England. He returned to Bharat in April 1934. All the while his gradual transformation was going on. He was trying to trim his political sails to suit the Muslim separatist demands, even at the cost of his personal convictions.'

Then came the 1937 elections which left the Muslim League he led high and dry. It could not command the confidence of the Muslims and had been reduced to a small and ineffective group. Jinnah now decided to take the final plunge. He was a proud, ambitious and hard-headed man and he decided upon a course which would get him quick dividends – the course of unalloyed, aggressive Muslim separatism. And he applied himself with drive and single-minded devotion for evolving newer and newer tactics and slogans to reach that goal.

Jinnah brought about a change in his personal life-style also. Jinnah who was so averse to anything which smacked of religion now became a 'devout Muslim'. He began joining the *Id* congregation prayers and become a visitor to the Mosque to hear *Khutba*. His allergy for the illiterate crowds disappeared : he now became very much a man of masses. Cries of *Allah-ho-Abar* were invariably heard along with *Quaid-e-Azam Zindabad* in every one of his meetings. Conversion of 'Jinnah-bhai' into 'Quaid-e-Azam' was complete. The person who had unequivo-

cally declared in the Central Legislative Assembly that he was 'a nationalist first, nationalist second and nationalist third', came to declare equally emphatically that 'Pakistan was born the day when the first Hindu was converted to Islam centuries ago.'

"The secret of the success of Jinnah's leadership of Muslim India," says Aziz Ahmad, a noted Muslim writer, "lay in essence in exactly the opposite of what appears to be the situation. He did not lead, but was led by the Muslim consensus. His role was that of a sincere clear-headed lawyer who could formulate and articulate in precise constitutional terms what his client really wanted."[8]

League : Turning the Tables against Congress

The major challenge to Jinnah's qualities of mass leadership came in the wake of the 1937 elections–which had left the League badly mauled. The Congress, with a view to pressing its advantage and reaping the harvests of its electoral victory, embarked upon its famous Muslim mass-contact programme. Nehru spearheaded the campaign in his home province of U.P.

Jinnah, though defeated in elections, did not betray any signs of defeatism. He sought to turn the tables against the Congress by unleashing a virulent propaganda barrage against it. He told the Muslims that the Congress was trying to exploit the weakness of the League and further undermine the unity of Muslims which was already broken up into several groups and parties. He called upon the Muslims to observe the day the Congress ministries assumed office as a black day spelling doom to Islam. Jinnah, who was till then far removed from religious fanaticism, now plunged headlong in rousing passions in the name of Islam. He raised a hue and cry that Muslims were being harassed, victimised and subjected to inhuman atrocities in the Congress-ruled provinces. An enquiry committee headed by the Nawab of Pirpur was announced by the League – which promptly produced a 'Report'. The Report published in November 1938 was, needless to say, a tissue of blatant lies from the start to the finish. Rajendra Prasad, the then Congress President, proposed to Jinnah submission of the report to the scrutiny of the Chief Justice of the Federal Court, Sir Maurice Gwyer, an Englishman, whose verdict would be

accepted by the Congress. The suggestion was of course turned down by the League, The challenge of Fazlul Huq to Nehru, to go round the areas where the Muslims were subjected to harassment and atrocities and as certain the truth, was coolly dropped by Huq himself when Nehru accepted it.

The Governors of provinces where the Congress ministries functioned, or Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State, had never raised the issue of 'Congress outrages' against Mulims. In fact, the Governor of U.P. Harry Haig – who was never accused even by the League of harbouring a soft corner for the Congress – had stated that "the (Congress) ministers, in dealing with questions raising communal issues, normally acted with impartiality and a desire to do what was fair." The Viceroy Linlithgow to whom the League had submitted the Report never uttered a word about it. In fact, the Viceroy, in a letter to Amery, the Secretary of State, described the League's complaints against the Congress Governments as psychological in character which he had never taken seriously. However, the League continued to make the Pirpur Report a major plank for its propaganda offensive against the Congress.

It is interesting to go into the nature of the 'charges' contained in the Pirpur Report. They pertained mainly to issues such as *Vande Mataram*, Tricolour Flag, Muslim mass-contact programme of Congress, Wardha scheme of basic education, riots, and Hindi.

Vande Mataram, as already noted, was in vogue for over three decades. It was sung in Assemblies and the Congress meetings for quite a number of years. Jinnah himself, a prominent member of the Congress for 15 years, had never found anything wrong with the song all those years. However, the Congress, to satisfy the League, decided to retain only the first two stanzas and drop the remaining ones which 'smacked of Hindu religious odour.' Now the League coined a new argument that the background of the novel *Anand Math* in which the song first appeared was such as to offend the Muslims–literally, the story of the lamb and the wolf recounted in the Congress-League context of Indian politics.

Same was the case with the allegation against the Tricolour Flag – about which the Muslims in general and the League in particular had never raised any objection till then. The criticism

of the League against the Congress campaign of Muslim mass-contact was preposterous, to say the least. For, thereby, it had sought to deny the right of any non-official organisation – other than the Muslims – to have contacts with the Muslims, thus extending the mischief of separate electorates to all spheres of social life and thus keeping the Muslims segregated from all other sections of society.

As regards the Wardha scheme of Basic Education–more popularly known as the Vidyamandir Scheme – its basic idea was one of laying greater emphasis on crafts rather than on books. It was formulated under the presidentship of Dr. Zakir Hussain and assisted by Kwaja G. Saiyidain of Aligarh University – both distinguished educationists. However, the Muslims would have none of it. They pounced upon the name Vidyamandir itself to charge it as a device for imposing Hindu culture and undermine the faith of Muslim children and destory Muslim culture, and demanded that Islamic education should be introduced throughout the country.

With regard to the so-called Hindu-Muslim riots, no Magistrate had so far indicated any of the Congress ministries.

The charge that the Congress was imposing Hindi too was ridiculous – the Congress having already opted for Hindustani.

Congress Goes to Jinnah's Doors

The League's fire-eating went on unabated. The more the Congress protested about its innocence and tried to reason and explain, the more vehement was the League's denunciation. Jinnah had correctly diagnosed the Congress mind and knew that the greater the intransigence on the part of the League, the greater would be the submissiveness of Congress. And true to its tradition, the Congress once agaian approached the League in order to dispel its "misunderstandings" and convince it of the benign intentions of the Congress in meeting all the legitimate demands of the League.

In his letter of 6 April 1938, Nehru told Jinnah that the Communal Award had already conceded most of his 14 Points and some others were also entirely acceptable to Congress; yet others required constitutional changes which were beyond its present competence. The Congress, he said, had already assured

that it sought alterations in the Communal Award only on the basis of mutual consent of the parties concerned.

Rajendra Prasad writes : "In 1938 efforts were made by Mahatma Gandhi and by Sri Subhas Chandra Bose, the then President of the Congress, to get from the League an idea of what would satisfy it so that the Congress and the country might consider the demands and meet them if possible. This was necessary because the fourteen points of Mr. Jinnah had been practically conceded by the British Government and incorporated in the Constitution Act of 1935 ... The League has, however, gone on adding to its demands and making any settlement impossible ... Mr. Jinnah insisted that the League should be recognized as the one and single body that represents the entire Muslim Community and that the Congress should speak on behalf of the Hindus. The Congress was unable to concede any of these points and indeed it could not. The negotiations did not succeed even in getting a formulation of the demands of the Muslim League."[9]

The Congress, unfortunately, had not grasped the deep game Jinnah was playing. Or, even if it had grasped, it had no nerve to grapple with it. Jinnah's motives were clear : The Muslims had not, as was borne out in 1937 election, accepted Muslim League as their overall representative, nor Jinnah as their supreme leader. Now Jinnah was bent upon reaching that unchallenged position. The Congress, by going after him again and again, gave the much needed fillip to blow up the image of the League and of Jinnah into an all-India dimension. The League's tactics of raising a big furore in the name of Islam, coupled with the Congress *de facto* recognition to it as the sole spokesman of Muslims, made its fortunes brighten up quickly. Several Muslim legislator who had won as independents or on behalf of other parties now began flocking round the League.

Savarkar's 'Two Nation' Theory

Another fortuitous circumstance from a most unexpected quarter came to the League's aid. Savarkar had been released in 1937 when the Cooper ministry took office in Bombay. The ministry was an interim one, being formed with the support of Jamnadas M. Mehta of Tilak Democratic Swaraj Party. Mehta had joined the ministry on the express condition that Savarkar would be released unconditionally, and accordingly Savarkar

was released. While presiding over the Hindu Mahasabha Session at Ahmedabad in the same year, Savarkar said :

"Several infantile politicians commit the serious mistake in supposing that India is already welded into a harmonious nation or that it could be welded thus for the mere wish to do so ... These our well-meaning but unthinking friends take their dreams for realities. That is why they are impatient of communal tangles and attribute them to communal organisations. But the solid fact is that the so-called communal questions are but a legacy handed down to us by centuries of cultural, religious and national antagonism between the Hindus and the Muslims. When the time is ripe you can solve them ; but you cannot suppress them by merely refusing recognition to them. It is safer to diagnose and treat the deep-seated disease than to ignore it, Let us bravely face unpleasant facts as they are. India cannot be assumed today to be a unitarian and homogeneous nation, but on the contrary *there are two nations in the main, the Hindus and the Muslims.*"[10] (emphasis ours)

Referring to the opposition of the Muslim Leaguers to *Vande Mataram*, Savarkar stated – "It is the *strife of different cultures and races and nations* and these trifles are but the passing and outward symptoms of this malady deep seated in the Moslem mind..."[11] (emphasis ours)

When Savarkar's speech appeared in the press, it came as a rude shock to all nationalists. No one could have dreamt this from one who had been one of the most powerful and uncompromising champions of Hindu Nationalism – which he was never tired of emphasising as the only genuine nationalism of Bharat.

However, Savarkar was dead-set against any idea of division of the country on the lines of a 'Hindu India' and 'Muslim India'. In the same speech Savarkar had also affirmed : "Let the Indian State be purely Indian. Let it not recognise any invidious distinctions whatsoever as regards the franchise, public services, offices, taxation on the grounds of religion and race. Let no cognizance be taken whatsoever of a man being Hindu or Mahommedan, Christian or Jew. Let all citizens of that Indian state be treated according to their worth irrespective of their religious or racial percentage in the general population.. "[12]

Viewed in the light of his unadulterated loyalty to a single, united, democratic and independent Bharat, Savarkar's theoretical exposition of the existence of two nations is bound to remain an enigma.

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8. Aziz Ahmad, *Studies*, p. 276
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14

Compromises on Nation's Symbols

THE QUESTIONS raised by the Muslim League as charges against the Congress mentioned in the last Chapter and the way the Congress tried to meet them showed in glaring contrast the attitudes of the two contending forces in the country. While the one was impelled by separatist, anti-national and aggressive designs, the other was caught in an illusion of meeting that threat by appeasing and conceding more and more, even at the cost of some of the basic national values and sentiments. However, the dictum that aggression feeds on appeasement and grows more aggressive proved true to the letter. A study of this aspect in detail would give us the cue to the factors which ultimately led to the inevitable end.

Vande Mataram 'Partitioned'

A most telling instance in point is the one relating to *Vande Mataram*. That celebrated song first appeared in the historical novel *Ananda Math* of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. It was a hymn of love of motherland sublimated into an ecstatic devotion to the Divine Mother – Bharat. In that exalted vision was manifest the trinity of Saraswati (the goddess of knowledge and culture), Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth and beauty) and Durga (the goddess of strength and energy). When Bengal was partitioned in 1905, *Vande Mataram* became the battlesong of the entire nation. Congress too, thereafter, adopted it as the national anthem and it was Rabindranath Tagore who sang it for the first time in the Congress session. To the British imperialist the very utterance of that simple expression *Vande Mataram* became the proverbial red rag to the bull. The Lt. Governor of East Bengal had ordained that no one should utter that word ; it was a 'crime'. Thousands of young men had mocked that

order and braved the British lathis and boots in the streets of Barisal by their thunderous roar of *Vande Mataram*. They had shed their blood and sanctfied that word into a potent and holy *Rashtra-Mantra*. It soon became the joyful and inspiring chant playing on the lips of the literate as well as the illiterate, the rich and the poor, the urban and the rural, the old and the young – in fact of one and all – men, women and children. Hundreds of revolutionary heroes ascended the gallows with that final obeisance to the Mother. Gandhiji would often extol the grandeur of that song. At Comilla, in 1927, he said that the song held up before one's mind the picture of the whole of Bharat – one and indivisible. Those two simple words had, indeed, wrought a miracle which even thousands of speeches and articles could not have achieved. It had become the cry of the awakened and resurgent national soul.

It was at the Kakinada session of Congress in 1923, that the first blow was struck at this national anthem. During those years the reputed singer and patriot, Vishnu Digambar Paluskar of Maharashtra, used to fill the inaugural session of Congress with his deep and resonant music of *Vande Mataram*. However, when he came on the dais this time, he was stopped by the President – Maulana Mohammed Ali. The Maulana exclaimed that singing of music was taboo in Islam and as such he would not permit it. The entire assembly was stunned ; everyone, including the high-ups and stalwarts adorning the dais, sat dumb-struck, unable to think out a reply to the President. Paluskar, however, stuck to his post. In a voice of righteous indignation he retorted to the Maulana, "The Indian National Congress is not the monopoly of any one Particular religious sect not is this place a mosque, where singing could be prohibited. You have therefore no authority to prevent me from singing *'Vande Mataram'*. Moreover, if singing in this place is against your particular religion, how is it that you could tolerate music in your presidential procession ?"[1]

The Maulana of course had no answer to this challenging question, but left the dais while Paluskar went through the singing.

The Congress was now beset with a fresh anxiety. *Vande Mataram* was proving an 'irritation' in the path of winning over the Muslims. Congress, as we know, had remained unruffled in the

face of the mighty assault, and even banning of *Vande Mataram*, by the British. It had, after passing through that fire, even adopted it as its national anthem. But now in the face of Muslim opposition, it began to waver. In 1922, it had already adopted Mohammad Iqbal's *Sāre jahānse acchā Hindustān hamārā* (our Hindustan is the best in the whole world) as the associate national anthem just to satisfy the Muslims.

True, Iqbal's poem thrills one's heart with love and pride for Hindusthan. But it was but a passing phase in the poetic outpourings of Iqbal. After his return from Germany, where he had delved deep into Islamic studies, Islam and Pan-Islamism became the dominant note of his thought and poetry. He now sang *"Muslim hai ham, watan hai sārā jahān hamārā"* (We are Muslims and the whole world is our land.)

To return to our story : The real test for Congress regarding *Vande Mataram* did not materialise until 1973 – when elections to the Provincial Assemblies were held and the Congress was returned to power in seven provinces. The Congress Governments, in line with the past Congress tradition, began commencing the Assembly proceedings with *Vande Mataram*. The Muslim League, equally true to its tradition, declared a war against it. The League members in the Assembly raised a storm of protest and staged walk-outs. The Congress Working Committee was scheduled to meet in October 1937 at Calcutta. The Muslim League conducted its session earlier and denounced the Congress-ruled States as 'Hindu States'. And the most weighty testimony it adduced was the singing of *Vande Mataram* in the Assemblies !

The League condemned the Congress for "foisting Bande Mataram as the national anthem upon the country" and termed it as "callous, positively anti-Islamic, idolatrous in the inspiration and ideas, and definitely subversive of the growth of genuine nationalism in India." The League further called upon "Muslim members of various legislatures and public bodies in the country not to associate themselves in any manner with this highly objectionable song. When the Congress Working Committee met a few days latter, it was haunted by the spectre of the League's opposition and formulated its policy on "Minority Rights." If Hindu-Muslim unity – without which the British would not part with power – was to be achieved, the Muslims should

not, at any cost, be allowed to feel displeased. Their sentiments should never be injured, for whatever reason. Accordingly, the Congress decided to cut out those portions of *Vande Mataram* which were likely to offend the Muslim susceptibilities as indicated in the League's resolution. Only the first two stanzas of the song – depicting a physical picture of the motherland – were retained and the rest dropped. Indeed, it was in those subsequent stanzas that the real essence of our nationalism and the spirit of freedom struggle were enshrined.

However, the Congress considered these stanzas as "containing certain allusions and a religious ideology which may not be in keeping with the ideology of other religious groups in India," and upheld "the validity of objection raised by Muslim friends to certain parts of the song." The Congress further gave its organisers 'freedom to sing any other song of an unobjectionable character in addition to, or *in the place of* Vande Mataram' (emphasis ours).

This last sentence clearly indicated that the Congress had even taken away the unique position of *Vande Mataram* as the National Anthem and placed it on par with other national songs.

Birth of a New Flag

The next in series was the National Flag. The most adored and shining symbol of a Nation – of its ideals and aspirations, its history and traditions, the endless sacrifices and sufferings of its martyrs, the prowess and penance of its heroes and saints – is undoubtedly its flag. What was the Congress thinking in the matter? How did the present Tricolour come to occupy that status?

Here are the relevant excerpts published by the Government of India Publications Division :

"During the session of the All India Congress Committee which met at Bezwada (now Vijayawada) about this time (1921), an Andhra youth prepared a flag and took it to Gandhiji. It was made up of two colours–red and green–representing the two major communities. Gandhiji suggested the addition of a white strip to represent the remaining communities of India and the Charkha to symbolise progress.

"Thus was the tricolour born, but it had not yet been officially accepted by the All India Congress Committee.

Gandhiji's approval, however, made it sufficiently popular to be hoisted on all Congress occasions.

"In 1931, when the A.I.C.C. met at Karachi, a resolution was passed stressing the need for a flag which would be officially acceptable to the Congress. There was already considerable controversy over the significance of the colours in the flag. Communal troubles had set in. The two major communities were at the parting of the ways and the stress was on communal interpretation.

"Meanwhile a Committee of seven was appointed to elicit opinion on the choice of a flag. It suggested a plain saffron flag with a charkha in reddish brown in the extreme left-hand corner."

However, the A.I.C.C. did not accept the suggestion.

"The year 1931 was a landmark in the history of the flag. A resolution was passed adopting tricolour flag as our national flag. This flag, the forbear of the present one, was saffron, white and green. It was, however, clearly stated that it bore no communal significance and was to be interpreted thus: saffron for courage and sacrifice, white for truth and peace, and green for faith and chivalry."[2]

It would be enlightening to know the reasoning advanced by the Flag Committee for its unanimous decision in favour of the saffron flag, and how the same came to be discarded by the A.I.C.C. The Flag Committee was composed of Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, Master Tara Singh, Pandit Nehru, D. B. Kalelkar, Dr. N. S. Hardikar and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya. The Committee elicited the opinions of various Provincial Congress Committees, the A.I.C.C. members and the public. The Committee said that the Sikhs had objected to the assortment of three colours in the existing Tricolour flag and urged for the inclusion of a colour for their community in it or for choosing a flag which was non-communal. Further, the Committee stated: "Ever since there had been some measure of objection taken to the Flag on this account and this committee was appointed to examine the objections to it and recommend a Flag acceptable to the Congress.

"The Committee are unanimous in holding that the colours of the Flag should not bear any communal significance .... In this view then a total change of colours seems called for ...Moreover

the Committee recognise that the existing colours of the flag without Charkha make it identical with that of Bulgaria, while the suggestion that the white should be transposed to the middle would make it identical with that of Persia. Thus, apart from any communal significance, the colours of the existing flag, we feel, cannot commend themselves to our acceptance on account of their similarity to those of two other countries in the world.

"Accordingly in recommending a new flag it is necessary to avoid all scope for confusion. We feel the flag must be distinctive, artistic, rectangular and non-communal. Opinion has been unanimous that our National Flag should be of a single colour except for the colour of the device. If there is one colour that is more acceptable to the Indians as a whole, even as it is more distinctive than another, one that is associated with this ancient country by long tradition, it is the *Kesari* or saffron colour. Accordingly it is felt that the flag should be of the *Kesari* colour except for the the colour of the device. That the device should be the Charkha in blue is unanimously agreed to. Accordingly we recommend that the National Flag should be of the *Kesari* or saffron colour having on it at the left top quarter the Charkha in blue."[3] However the A.I.C.C., not daring to differ from Gandhiji's choice of tricolour scheme, simply okayed the same. The mental background which prompted this decision was unfortunate in the extreme.

Bharat was not a new nation, nor was it a 'nation in the making' as the British wanted to fool us into believing. It had been an ancient nation, having great and glorious periods of history to its credit in the past. And the Saffron – Bhagawa – had been its National Insignia since time immemorial. Naturally the Bhagawa carried the memories of the inspiring achievements of the nation in many a field of life including the saga of matchless heroism and martyrdom in the cause of Freedom. It was this time-honoured spring of national inspiration that was shelved to the background just for the sake of pampering the communal Muslim mind.

'Hindi' into 'Hindustani'

The next casualty was national language. Right from Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Savarkar, Bankim Chandra and Tilak, to

Gandhiji and Rajaji, most of our great modern nation-builders had striven hard to make Hindi the common national link language for our people over the entire stretch of the land. There were no two opinions about the urgent and supreme need to forge a common link which would draw its nourishment from the ancient culture and tradition of the soil and thus strengthen the ties of mutual brotherhood among the various groups of diverse languages, sects, castes, provinces, etc. Hindi, having the largest number of persons speaking it as their mother tongue and using it as a vehicle of social intercourse, could easily be looked upon by other linguistic groups as a sister language – Sanskrit, being the common mother of them all. Almost all our major languages with their tap-roots in Sanskrit have been enriched by the same common cultural heritage enshrined in Sanskrit. Hindi naturally began to spread fast and wide as a part of the movement for national self-assertion.

However, the Muslim League unsheathed its sword against Hindi and denounced it as a sign of Hindu domination. The League declared that it could not think of co-operating with the Congress unless the latter accepted Urdu as the National Language in place of Hindi.

Here it would be necessary to understand the genesis of Urdu and its relation with the Muslim community in order to grasp the real motive at the back of the League's mind in raking up this controversy. Urdu was a Persianised form of Hindi used by the Moghul troops settled in and around Delhi. This lingo had come into vogue for their intercourse with the local Hindus. However, the Moghul Emperors right from Babar to Aurangzeb spoke Turkish or Persian, and never Urdu. It is only just over the last 200 years that Urdu has come into vogue as a dialect among certaion section of Muslims.

In the early days of British rule, in provinces like U.P. and Bihar, the British just continued the tradition of the previous Moghuls of using Persian for all official and judicial purposes. However, as years passed, the use of English and local languages began to gain ground. It was also natural that Hindus should have resented the imposition of a foreign language – the Persian – and began insisting on Hindi for educational and official purposes.

Muslims looked upon this effort as a move on the part of

Hindus to eradicate all vestiges of their past imperial glory. They bewailed *"Yeh Urdu ka janaza hai zara shaanse nikale"* – funeral of Urdu has started, come out to witness it ! They began setting up Urdu as against Hindi. However the fact was, Urdu was no more the monopoly of the Muslims than Hindi was of Hindus. The Hindu genius had contributed to the flowering of the elegant style of Urdu poetry just as there were quite a few Muslim writers who used Hindi rich in Sanskrit words in their works. The Hindi works of many eminent Hindu poets are freely interspersed with Persian words, which have become current coin in the spoken dialect. It was only subsequently that Persian script was adopted for Urdu. In the strict sense of the term, Urdu does not merit the status of a 'language' at all. Distinct modes of grammar and verbs are the *sine qua non* for a language. Urdu possesses neither of the two – they being just borrowed from Hindi. It is more correct to say that Urdu is a Persianised dialect of Hindi.

The factor which, more than any other, distinguishes Urdu from Hindi – is that the former uses the Persian characters whereas Hindi uses the Devanagari. As such, the Muslims' attempt at pitting Urdu against Hindi, making it appear as Muslim versus Hindu confrontation, was artificial and obviously politically motivated. Any stick which came in handy was good enough for the Muslim League to beat the Hindus and the Congress.

The Muslim claim that Urdu was their religious language was far from truth. A majority of Muslims in India spoke the local languages ; this applied to the so-called Muslim provinces as well. The Bengali Muslims spoke Bengali and were as much proud of that language as the Bengali Hindus. When, after the formation of Pakistan, the Western Pakistan sought to impose Urdu on them, the Bengalis opposed it tooth and nail. This was one of the main irritants which eventually sparked off the revolt of Bangla Desh. In West Pakistan too – even in the recent census – most of the people have put down their mother tongues as Baluchi, Punjabi, Sindi and Pushtu.

But the Congress never bothered to delve deep into the merits of the problem ; no objective – much less nationalist – criterion was applied. It was a victim to the one all-consuming

passion of wooing the Muslims into its fold, at whatever cost.

As a result, the Congress slipped on this question also. Here, too, as in the case of the National Anthem and National Flag, a compromise was effected. A new hybrid language – half Hindi and half Urdu – named Hindustani, was sought to be created, which the Congress accepted in place of Hindi. Congress assured that "Hindustani written both in the Nagari and Urdu scripts would be the national language. Both scripts would be officially recognised and the choice would be left to the people concerned and this was the policy being pursued by the Congress ministries."

Language, it must be recognised, is not a meare mechanical vehicle of expression. It is an inseparable component of the culture of the people ; in fact, a living medium of expression for the latter. If the mediun becomes polluted, the current of cultrue flowing through it also gets perverted. The experiments with Hindustani also bore testimony to this truth. In many of the new-fangled Hindustani textbooks for the children, Sri Rama became 'Badshah Rama', Sita became 'Begum Sita', Lakshmana became 'Shahajada Lakshmana, and Vasishtha 'Moluana Vasishtha'. All of them now had taken their births afresh as symbols of 'Hindu-Muslim unity'! The National Language thus became the third in the series to be maimed and mutilated.

Go – bye to Points of Nation's Faith

In fact, every point of national inspiration and venerstion was systematically attacked by the Muslims. The celebrated song *Shiva Bāvani* by the great Hindi poet Bhushan was another target. The song had thrilled millions of Hindus crossing the barriers of language, caste and sect. It was one of the favourite tunes of Swami Vivekananda. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj has been a national hero *par excellence,* looked upon as its saviour by the entire Hindu Nation. The following couplet of Bhushan has been especially popular – for it sums up what Shivaji means to every Hindu :

Kashiji ki kalā jāti, Mathurā masjid hoti
Shivaji na hote to sunnat hoto sab ki

(The beauty of Benaras would have vanished, Mathura would have turned into a Masjid, and all would have been

circumcised, had not Shivaji been born.)

It was nothing strange threfore that the fanatic Muslims should have seen in Shivaji and songs like *Shiva Bāvani* the very antithesis of all its designs.

A protest voice was raised against *Shiva Bāvani* at the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at Nagpur in 1934. Rajendra Prasad was in the chair. Gandhiji also was present. It was urged that many of the stanzas which wonded the sentiments of the Muslims be deleted from the official and recognised publications and literature. Many members, however, pleaded that the proposal should not be accepted. However, Gandhiji's views prevailed and it was resolved to delete the important portions of that inspring poem.

Bhajans also were not spared. The soul-elevating chanting of *'Raghupati Raghav Raja Rama patita pavana Sita Rama'* was intoned on the lips of millions of our countrymen for the last several centuries. Rama and Sita were not just a pair of 'divine incarnations.' They were held aloft for us as effulgent models which had moulded our people generation after generation with culture and character, chastity and morality. Indeed they presented the sublime images of ideal manhood and womanhood which had moulded Bharat as the cultural guide to humanity. Even that founthead of national devotion was not spared. A new line, *'Ishwara Allah tere nam, sab ko sanmati de Bhagavan'* was added on to the original. To the Hindu, Rama and Ishwara and Allah are all, without doubt, various names of the same Almighty. To the Muslim, however, that very idea was repugnant. To expect him to take to that innovation was just chasing a mirage.

Arya Samaj was one more factor which had become an eyesore to the Muslim communalists.

The Samaj was a great Hindu fort of resistance which had come up for protecting the Hindu society from the Muslim onslaughts. The sleeping lion in the Hindu was roused by the indomitable Swami Dayananda Saraswati. Scores of educational institutions had sprung up and thousands of Hindus were marching ahead in every field of national life under the banner of Arya Samaj. It had also fed the fires of national struggle.

The *shuddhi* movement launched by the Samaj had especially alarmed the Muslim proselytisers. Complaints were made to

Gandhiji against the activities of the Samaj. In a number of articles in *Young India*, Gandhiji branded the Arya Samaj propaganda as being parochial and against the catholic spirit of Hinduism and placed its *Shuddhi* campaign on par with the *Tabligh* of the Muslim *ulemas*.

One more recurring theme of Muslim opposition was with regard to the demand of Hindus to ban cow-slaughter. The Muslims asserted that it was their 'religious right to kill the cow', and that without acceding to it the Congress could not hope to secure the co-operation of Muslims. Another objection raised by the Muslims was with regard to the playing of music before the mosques. How baseless these so-called objections were, had been exposed by many Muslims leaders themselves.

For example : "In the Muslim All Parties Conference held in January 1929, he (Aga Khan) pointed out that in the home of Islam – Arabia – there was no custom of cow sacrifice, that Prophet Ibrahim did not consider animal sacrifice as a part of religious observance. It was also pointed out by others that in other Muslim countries no one took religious objection to the playing of music before the mosques."[4]

Maulvi Mohammad Yakub declared that Islam did not prohibit music in the neighbourhood of mosques provided there was no attempt at intentional disturbance of worship. In August 1926, Qutbuddin Ahmad, the Secretary of the Bengal Presidency Muslim League, issued the following press statement : "I humbly submit that the playing of music before mosques should not be a religious issue when people of other denominations are concerned. Our Holy Prophet (may peace be on him) himself allowed the playing of music inside the mosque during the Id Festival and asked Hazrat Ayesha to witness the same (Sahib Bokhari).... The Mahmel procession to Mecca was always accompanied by the Egyptian bands. During the Moslem Rule, Ram Lila used to be held in front of Ham-i-Mashid at Delhi and the royalties used to gather at the mosque and garland the hero of the play. In Calcutta, in a Mahomedan family, musical marriage procession was started from the house in the compound of which a mosque was situated. Certain *akharas* with music start from a mosque even to this day and all other *akharas* visit the Mowlally Darga adjacent to the mosque and play music for hours together without any protest from any quarter. I am therefore of opinion

that it has nothing to do with Shariat and has been invented by self-interested persons or parties in order to cause wanton irritation among the ignorant section of the community."[5]

The gangster style of League's politics was effectively exposed by Ambedkar: "Islamic law does not insist upon the slaughter of the cow for sacrificial purposes and no Musalman, when he goes to *Haj*, sacrifices the cow in Mecca or Medina. But in India they will not be content with the sacrifice of any other animal. Music may be played before a mosque in all Muslim countries without any objection. Even in Afghanistan, which is not a secularized country, no objection is taken to music before a mosque. But in India the Musalmans must insist upon its stoppage for no other reason except that the Hindus claim a right to it."[6]

However, the reaction of Congress to these intransigent demands was, unfortunately, one of submission. Nehru in a letter to Jinnah (6-4-1938) assured him on this score:

"As regards cow-slaughter, there has been a great deal of entirely false and unfounded propaganda against the Congress suggesting that the Congress was going to stop it forcibly by legislation. The Congress does not wish to undertake any legislative action in this matter to restrict the established rights of the Muslims."

Nation's Fighting Will Weakened

As a result of all these, it was the faith of Hindus that was constantly eroded. The Hindu began to drastically change himself and his hoary national identity, but the Muslim would not budge even an inch from his position. He would neither utter *Bharat Mata ki Jai* nor *Vande Mataram* – not even the one partitioned for his sake. Nor would he respect the Tricolour, in spite of the green having been included therein to satisfy him. Nor would he take to Hindusthani.

This is the story of how the Congress policy of Muslim appeasement went on, on the one hand aggravating the Muslim intransigence and, on the other, poisoning the roots of national faith and fighting will of the Hindus. These two factors together only helped to devitalise and demoralise the movement of national liberation.

One often wonders how the Hindu stuck to the Congress

even at the cost of his age-old cherished values of culture, tradition and history. The secret of this paradox lies in the irrepressible urge for freedom ingrained in the Hindu. Tilak's roaring assertion 'Swaraj is my birth-right' was a spontaneous expression of a faith that had entered into the very marrows of the Hindu. The endless price in terms of blood, tears and sweat he had paid for safeguarding the freedom and honour of *Swadesh* and *Swadharma*, the Revolt of 1857, the pyral flames of martyrdom of the revolutionaries – all these had further intensified that passion for freedom. On top of it all, a galaxy of self-sacrificing leaders were at the helm of the freedom movement whom the Hindu masses implicitly trusted to deliver the goods. The Hindu, thus roaming in the promised wonderland of Freedom, began to swallow one after another the bitter pills of Muslim appeasement slowly administered to him. Alas, he could not, till the very last, realise the terrible effects of these doses ; he could not conceive that they would mutilate the very Freedom for which he had suffered and sacrificed so much and so long.

For the Congress leadership, however, the tragic results of their policy of appeasement were all too patent, but they only pretended not to see them. They were already sliding fast down that slope, but they justified it saying that it was the only right path to take them to the cherished goal of Swaraj. Jinnah who eventually became the spokesman of the Muslims shrewdly diagonised this basic weakness of the Congress and began playing upon it. He started putting forth newer and newer demands – increasing from 'Four Points' to 'Seven Points', then to 'Fourteen Points' and so on. Congress, chasing the 'golden deer' of Jinnah's co-operation, began conceding his demands one after another. Finally 'the golden deer' vanished into thin air and the 'Sita' of national unity kidnapped !

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15

Plan for Balkanisation

THE SECOND World War erupted on 3 September 1939. England declared war on Germany on that day, as a result of the latter's invading Poland. Viceroy Linlithgow followed it up by declaring Bharat as their partner in the war and appealed to the Indian people to co-operate with the Government in its war efforts. He met Gandhiji, Jinnah and the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes and sought their support and co-operation.

Besides this appeal, the British continued their tactics of setting up Muslims against the Congress. Jinnah's own surprised comments gave clue to the impending moves of the Government. Jinnah was amazed that he was called by the Government even though no province had a Muslim League ministry. He remarked, "After the war ... suddenly there came a change in the attitude towards me. I was treated on the same basis as Mr. Gandhi. I was wonder-struck why all of a sudden I was promoted and given a place side by side with Mr. Gandhi."[1]

Congress intimated its reactions to the Government. In short they were: "We are prepared to co-operate in order to remove Fascism and Imperialism, but first of all we want the British Government to state in unequivocal terms what their war aims are with regard to democracy, imperialism and the new order that is envisaged, and how, in particular, these aims are going to be applied to India."

The Muslim League offered to support the Government on two conditions – "that the Muslims must be given 'justice and fair play' in the Congress provinces and an assurance that no declaration regarding the quesion of constitutional advance for India would be made, nor any constitution framed, without the consent and approval of the Muslim League." The two demands of Jinnah highlighted the doggedness with which he was pursuing

his objective and trying to turn every new situation to his advantage.

The Congress leaders in their meeting with the Viceroy stressed that though the Government might not consider any basic constitutional changes during the war, it should at least come forth with an assurance that India would be granted Complete Independence at the close of war. Then only would the Congress co-operate with the war efforts of the Government.

It was very natural for Indian leaders to feel slighted that India's participation in the war was taken for granted – a war in which she had absolutely no concern. Further, a government which expected Bharat to fight for the independence of such distant countries as England, Czechoslovakia and Poland had no right to keep her under its heels. As such the Indian leaders had every right to demand a categorical undertaking by the British to be fulfilled at least after the war.

However, the British gave an evasive reply that "at the end of war they would be willing to enter into consultation with representatives of the several communities, parties and interests in India, and with the Indian Princes, with a view to securing their aid and co-operation in the framing of such modifications in the plan embodied in the Government of India Act as might seem disirable."[2]

Congress Quits, League Enters !

The Congress reaction to this statement was swift and sour. It condemned the Government's stand and directed all its ministries to resign, as their continuation in office would have amounted to their collaboration with the Government in its war efforts. The Congress resolution was, from the standpoint of upholding national self-respect, undoubtedly laudable. However, relinquishing of power at a crucial stage resulted in a void which the Muslim League was only too ready to fill. It afforded a golden opportunity to the British-Muslim axis to openly and unabashedly work to the detriment of national interests. Finding that the League was in the good books of the Government, those Muslim leaders who were till then sitting on the fence now began jumping over to the League's bandwagon.

To Assam, especially, resignation of the Congress coalition ministry came as an unmitigated tragedy. For, in place of the

Congress rule, Mohammed Sadulla Khan was invited by the Viceroy to lead the ministry. The long awaited chance for flooding Assam with Muslims and converting it into a Muslim-majority province was now presented to them. Sadulla Khan and Nizamuddin, the Bengal premier, soon joined hands. Sadulla Khan extended an 'invitation' to the Bengal Muslims to settle in Assam and help them in their 'grow more food campaign'. The motive behind this was so patent that even Viceroy Wavell termed it as a 'grow more Muslims campaign'.

When the Congress gave up office, Jinnah called upon the Muslims to celebrate that day – 22 December 1939 – as a Day of Deliverance, for being 'freed from the atrocious Congress rule of tyranny and injustice upon the Muslims'. The British being in no mood for any kind of rapprochement with the Congress, the prolonged talks between the Viceroy and Gandhiji in the beginning of 1940 proved sterile. Jinnah was now a happy man. His policy was crystal clear – to go on opposing whatever the Congress would propose. When the Congress demanded the formation of a Constituent Assembly, the League said 'no'. Again, when Congress insisted on an assurance of Complete Independence, Jinnah would not have anything to do with it. He would not even opt for Dominion Status during the period of war.

At the international level also, the British began pampering the Pan-Islamic sentiment with a view to drawing the Muslim countries closer to their side. Towards this end, in January 1940, the British Government organised, under the auspices of the Royal Central Asian Society, a centre of Muslim religion and culture in London.

Referring to this development Nehru wrote :

"You will have noticed the rebirth of the idea of Pan-Islamism. This is fundamentally due to the desire of the British Government to encourage it. Pan-Islamism in 1914 and later was an anti-imperialist force. It weakened the British the people in their war effort and later it coloured the background of the Khilafat movement in India. Today this very idea is being used in support of British imperialism. This breaks, to some extent, the national front in India and helps to influence Muslim opinion in the Near East in favour of England."[3]

The presidential address of Maulana Azad to the Congress at

the Ramgarh Session in the third week of March that year put forth an altogether new thesis regarding the position of Muslims in India. He said, "In the texture of Indian politics, nothing is further remote from truth than that Indian Muslims occupy the position of a political minority. The Muslims in India number between 80 and 90 millions. The same type of social or racial divisions, which affect other communities, do not divide them. The powerful bonds of Islamic brotherhood and equality have protected them to a large extent from the weakness that flows from social divisions ... Even if we are compelled at present to consider this question on a basis of religious groupings, the position of Muslims is not that of a minority only. If they area minority in seven provinces, they are in a majority in five. This being so, there is absolutely no reason why they should be oppressed by the feeling of being a minority..."

When Azad's speech appeared in papers, pressmen approached Ali M. K. Dehlavi to know the League's reaction. *Times of India* reported : "Asked about Maulana Azad's remarks regarding the minorities, Sir Ali M. K. Dehlavi observed, 'There I mus confess I was most agreeably surprised and I am glad to discover that our lost brother the great Maulana is, after all, a Muslim at heart and politically, not only that but a Pan-Islamist. He has made an authoritative admission, as the duly elected and accredited President of the Congress, that the Muslim in India are a nation and not a minority."[4]

League's "Pakistan Resolution"

Closely following on the heels of Azad's statement, came the adoption of 'Pakistan Resolution' by the Muslim League. At its momentous session held on 23 March 1940 at Lahore, the League, by its resolution, threw a veritable bombshell in the Indian political arena. In his presidential address to the large number of participants drawn from different parts of the country, Jinnah declared : "The problem of India is not inter-communal but manifestly of an inter-national character. ... It is extremely difficult to appreciate why our Hindu friends fail to understand the real nature of Islam and Hinduism. They are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are, in fact, different and distinct social orders. It is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality and this

misconception of one Indian nation has gone far beyond the limits, and is the cause of most of our troubles and will lead India to destruction if we fail to revise our notions in time. The Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, literature. They neither intermarry nor interdine together and, indeed, they belong to two different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their aspects on life and of life are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Mussalmans derive their inspirations from different sources of history. They have different epics, their heroes are different, and have different episodes. Very often, the hero of one is a foe of the other and likewise their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minorits and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of sush a state.[5]... Mussalmans are not a minority, as it is commonly known and understood. ... Mussalmans are a nation according to any definition of a nation, and, they must have their own homelands, their territory and their state."

The League confirmed the thesis of Jinnah in the form of an official resolution which came to be known as Pakistan Resolution :

"It is the considered view of this session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principle, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constiuted with territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute 'Independent States' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign."[6]

A study of the League's resolution in the background of Azad's remarks revealed a remarkable similarity of views with regard to the basic doctrine enunciated by him. The League had given up its stand that Muslims were a minority in need of minority safeguards, and had further extended that principle to claim an independent statehood as an expression of their independent national entity.

It will be observed that nowhere in the League's resolution was the word 'Pakistan' used. For so many days even after the resolution was passed, Jinnah never used the word 'Pakistan' nor would he go into clarifications and explanations of his concept. When Durga Das, a journalist, asked him why he had not responded to Gandhiji's request for a definition of his demands he shot back, "You can depend on Rajagopalachari to use his sharp wits to define Pakistan for me."

Khaliquzzaman says : "The next morning the Hindu Press came out with big headlines 'Pakistan Resolution Passed,' although the word was not used by anyone in the speeches nor in the body of the resolution. The Nationalist Press supplied to the Muslim masses a concentrated slogan which immediately conveyed to them the idea of a State. It would have taken long for the Muslim leaders to explain the Lahore resolution and convey its real meaning and significance to them. Years of labour of the Muslim leaders to propagate its full import amongst the masses was shortened by the Hindu Press in naming the resolution the 'Pakistan Resolution.' "[7]

The foregoing comments of Khaliquzzaman reflect the grim contrast between the nationalist and the communalist Muslims' attitudes. The term 'Pakistan Resolution', highlighted by the nationalist press as a warning to Indian nationalists, proved to be a rallying cry for the separatist Muslim crusaders !

Very recently, in February 1982, the frontier leader Khan Wali Khan, son of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, told a Lahore weekly *Chattan* "that the formula for the 1947 partition of the sub-continent was prepared by Sir Zaffurullah Khan, a member of Viceroy Lord Linlithgow's Council, at the instance of the British.

"Documents dug out by him from the India Office Library, he said, showed that the formula was submitted to Mohammed Ali Jinnah on March 12, 1940, 11 days before the Muslim League adopted the Pakistan resolution at Lahore.

"Forwarding Sir Zaffurullah's note to Lord Zetland, then Secretary of State for India, Lord Linlithgow wrote: "that while (Zaffurullah) cannot of course admit its authorship, his document has been prepared for adoption by the Muslim League"...[8]

It is interesting to note that in the Pakistan Resolution, demand was made for 'independent states for Muslims in North-Eastern and Eastern Zones of India'. In fact, this itself was a repudiation of the League's claim of separate nationality for Muslims based upon their Islamic identity. The demand for formation of two states evidently implied two different nations even among the Indian Muslims. It was only later on that the word 'States' was changed into 'State'. Jinnah made light of the whole affair by saying that the original word was a printing error!

The choice of Lahore as the place for the League's 'Pakistan Resolution' was very significant. It was at the same spot exactly a decade ago that the Congress had vowed under Nehru's presidentship to achieve Complete Independence. Now the Muslim League had thrown the gauntlet for a divided Independence! Future history waited with bated breath to witness whose pledge, of the two, would be fulfilled.

In the wake of the Lahore resolution, Ambedkar wrote an entire thesis *Thoughts on Pakistan* wherein he discussed the scheme of Pakistan. Arguing the case of Muslims for Pakistan as "a Nation calling for home," he said, "The Muslims have developed a 'will to live as a nation. For them nature has found a territory which they can occupy and make it a state as well as a cultural home for the new-born Muslim nation. Given these favourable conditions, there should be no wonder, if the Muslims say that they are not content to occupy the position which the French choose to occupy in Canada or the English choose to occupy in South Africa, and that they shall have a national home which they can call their own.

"If there is any doubt about her (India's) dual personality, it has now been dispelled by the Resolution of the Muslim League demanding the cutting up of India into two, Hindustan and Pakistan, so that these conflicts and convulsions due to a dual personality having been bound in one may cease forever, and so freed from each other, may dwell in separate homes congenial to their respective cultures, Hindu and Muslim."[9]

Ambedkar also urged that it would be most unwise to postpone the decision: "Either the scheme should be abandoned and another substitued by mutual agreement or it should be decided upon."

'August Offer'

As war continued, the condition of Britain worsened. European countries like Denmark, Holland, Belgium and France had fallen like a house of cards before the German onslaught. The whole of Europe lay at the feet of Hitler. The British forces stationed in poland had to beat a grand retreat. Inside England the Government was changed and Winston Churchill became the Prime Minister in place of Austen Chamberlain. In view of the grim war situation Britain initiated one more move to rope in the Congress in its war efforts. In August 1940, it announced a plan – the August Offer – which embodied an assurance of including Indians in the Governor General's Executive Council.

By this time Jinnah, after having firmly secured all his previous demands in the 1935 Act, had now put forth fresh claims and demanded changes in the Act. The August Offer dutifully dittoed his demand: "With regard to the position of minorities in any future constitutional scheme, His Majesty's Government had already made it clear that no part, either of the Act of 1935 or of the policy and plans on which it was based, would be excluded from re-examination. The Government could not contemplate the transfer of power to a system of Government the authority of which was denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life, nor could it be a party to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a system."[10]

The only party which felt gratified at this offer was of course the Muslim League. It expressed its satisfaction and asked the League members to participate in the War Committees. However, it refused to join the G. G's Council as the Government had not acceded to its stipulation for inclusion of three Muslim members in it. The Congress rejected the offer out of hand as it had nothing to propose positively except a vague hope that eventually India would attain freedom and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth.

Savarkar: 'Militarise Hindus'

The Hindu Mahasabha, on the other hand, welcomed the offer as a step in the right direction. However it criticised the Government's assurances to the minorities as too alarming

to the Hindus. It said, "Any attempt to cut at the root of indivisibility of India as a political unit could not fail to evoke an undying opposition from Hindudom as a whole."

With an eye on the course of events likely to overtake the country, Savarkar undertook a nation-wide whirlwind tour calling upon the Hindus to join the army. In his meetings he said : "Since the days of our First War of Independence in 1857, it has been the policy of the British Government to keep the army out of politics. Our policy should be to carry politics into the Indian army by all possible means; and once we succeed in this, the battle of freedom will be won. Forces beyond their control have compelled the British Government to trust you with arms and ammunition. Formerly youths had to rot in cells for being in possession of pistols, but today the Britishers are placing rifles, guns, cannons, and machine-guns in your hands. Get fully trained as soldiers and commanders. Get thousands of mechanics trained as technical experts in building shipyards, aeroplances, guns and ammunition factories. Do not worry about the bonds and agreements. The reverse of those scraps is blank. You can write new bonds and new agreements on it when the time comes. Mind, Swaraj will never come to you, although you cover the whole earth with paper resolutions. But if you pass resolutions with rifles on your shoulders, you will attain it."[11]

Till then Muslims formed quite a big section of the Indian Army. In the not unlikely event of the slackening of the British hold on India in future, such a situation could very well spell India's doom. Especially, many educated Hindu youths responded to Savarkar's call and joined the officer's ranks.

This new development naturally checkmated the Muslim ambitions. Sir Ziauddin Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University, in a speech at Poona raised an alarm at the increasing number of Hindus enlisting daily in the army, navy and air forces, thereby reducing ihe percentage of Muslims in the fighting forces. The *Eastern Times*, a prominent Muslim League paper, raised an outcry against the march stolen upon the Muslim monopoly and wrote : "The Hindu Mahasabha has agitated strongly for militarization of the Hindus as a great opportunity and, with the active co-operation of the Government, has met with astonishing success."[12]

In 1941 at Madras, the Muslim League repeated its demand for an independent sovereign Muslim state. It should be understood, however, that not all the members of the League were in favour of such a demand. The moderates in the League had expressed their strong reservations about it.

At the Madras Session, several loyalist Hindu leaders like E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker, M. C. Raja, R. K. Shanmukham Chetty and others were specially invited. Jinnah advocated the Dravidastan theory and advised them to strive for the establishment of independent Dravidastan, and assured them of the Muslim hand of friendship.

Sikandar Hayat Khan, the Unionist Premier of Punjab, who was also a League member, declared during the course of a debate in the Punjab Legislative Assembly in March 1941 : "We do not ask for freedom, that there may be Muslim raj here and Hindu raj elsewhere. If that is what Pakistan means, I will have nothing to do with it."[13]

Fazal-ul-Huq, the Premier of Bengal, also resigned from the Muslim League. The Congress having refused to support him, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee mustered support of all non- Congress Hindu members to enable him to form a coalition ministry and keep out the Muslim League.

Cripps Mission : Its Lessons

By the beginning of 1942, Britain's positions became precarious on all the war fronts. Japan's entry into war posed a grave threat to the British empire from the eastern side. When Singapore and Rangoon surrendered to Japan, Churchill saw in it the "shadow of a heavy and far-reaching military defeat over India." Roosevelt, President of America, and Chiang Kai-Shek of China urged the Britsh Government to adopt a conciliatory policy towards Bharat. Britain too felt that the situation demanded some initiative on its part if only to dissuade the Congress from embarking upon a programme of confrontation with the Government.

Churchill formulated a scheme and deputed Sir Stafford Cripps, a member of the War Cabinet and reportedly a personal freind of Nehru. He was not only held in high esteem both in Britain and in India but had also recently shot into world fame as the skilful diplomat who was instrumental in breaking up

the alliance between Hitler and Stalin and bringing Russia into the British camp. His arrival in India was naturally looked forward to with some amount of hope and expectation.

The Cripps Proposals, in fine, were :

(1) The reconstitution of the G.G's Executive Council during the war period on the pattern of Dominion Status.

(2) Formation of a Constituent Assembly to frame a constitution for Indian as a Dominion.

(3) Freedom to provinces and the Princely States to remain out of the Dominion.

Cripps had assured that the Hyderabad State would be permitted to join the separate Muslim Dominion formed by the Muslim-majority provinces. The Plan had also authorised the Muslim rulers of the princely states not only to remain independent but also to form a separate federation.

Khaliquzzaman says : "This (Cripps Plan) clearly envisaged Pakistan and afforded us a clear chance to get the full Pakistan of our conception without danger of a claim for the partition of the Provinces of Punjab and Bengal for which unfortunately the language used in the Lahore Resolution 'with such territorial readjustment as may be necessary' left a wide loop-hole."[14]

On the very face of it, Cripps Proposals were such as would have been flatly rejected by any nationalist committed to the unity of the country. Nehru criticised it saying that "the whole background is one of division and the real political and economic issues have been relegated to the second place."

Gandhiji crisply commented, "It is a post-dated cheque on a fast crashing bank." When Cripps met Gandhiji the latter told him, "Why have you come with such proposals ? I would advise you to go back home by the first available plane." Gandhiji objected to the proposals principally on the grounds that they

1) envisaged the cutting up of India into three parts,
2) granted veto to the minorities,
3) assured merely Dominion Status and not Complete Independence, and, lastly,
4) left the ministers with no voice in the defence of the country during the war period.

The Congress however kept aside Gandhiji's opinion and proceeded to carry on talks with Cripps. Rajendra Prasad's

remarks in this regard lay bare the working of the Congress mind in those days :

"The declaration thus concluded the right of secession to any Province of British India from the All-India Union and practically accepted the demand of the Muslim League for the creation of Muslim States independent of the Indian Union. The Congress Working Committee did not reject the offer. as it could have done, on the ground that it contemplated a break-up of the Indian unity. On the other hand it made it clear that it cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will, but pointed out that any break-up of that unity would be injurious to all concerned. It rejected the offer on the other ground that the offer kept the defence out of the sphere of responsibility and reduced it to a farce and nullity."[15]

The Muslim League waited till the Congress decision was made known and then passed a resolution that the proposals in the present form were not acceptable. While it expressed its happiness that the possibility of Pakistan was recognized by implication, it objected that its claim for partition of India had not been explicitly upheld. In conclusion, the League declared that since the proposals for the future set-up were unacceptable, it would serve no useful purpose to deal with the other immediate question of participation in the Governor General's Executive Council.

Here is a glaring contrast between the wavering of the Congress on the one hand and the steadfastness of the League on the other, in pursuing their respective ultimate goals – the Congress setting aside its basic and ultimate objective and going after the immediate and temporary gains, and the League keeping its vision set firmly on its ultimate goal and deciding every temporary question on that touchstone alone.

Signs were not wanting that had the British already made up their minds to Balkaniz Bharat in the event of their quiting. Amery, the Secretary of State, had given expression to a dangerous dictum that "India's future house of freedom has room for many mansions."

The conclusions which Gandhiji drew in the wake of the failure of Cripps Mission give us a peep into the serious drift-

ing which had entered into the Congress thinking. "It is no use brooding over the past or British mistakes. Attainment of Independence is an impossibility, till we have soived the communal tangle. If the vast majority of Muslims regard themselves as a separate nation having nothing in common with the Hindus and others, no power on earth can compel them to think otherwise. And if they want to partition India on that basis, they must have the partition, unless the Hindus want to fight against such a division. So far as I can see, such a preparation is silently going on on behalf of both parties. That way lies suicide. Each party will probaly want British or foreign aid. In that case, good-bye to Independence."[16]

The Hindu Mahasabha firmly rejected the long-term plan in the Cripps Proposals because of the option given to provinces to stay out of the Union which would destory the unity of the country. The Sikhs declared that they would resist by all possible means separation of Punjab from the Indian Union.

Rajaji's New Venture

The gulf between the Congress and the Muslim League remained as wide as ever. C. Rajagopalachari now came forward to bridge the gap. He got a resolution passed by the Congress legislators of his province recommending to the A.I.C.C. acceptance of the League's demand for separation and starting of negotiations with the League for the purpose of arriving at an agreement and securing the installation of a National Government to meet the present emergency. The resolution urged that to sacrifice the chances of the formation of a national government for the doubtful advantage of maintaining a controversy over the unity of India is the most unwise policy and that it had become necessary to choose the lesser evil.

The Muslim League was naturally jubilant that prominent leaders inside the Congress were now coming out openly in support of its demand. However, the A.I.C.C. rejected Rajaji's resolution by an overwhelming majority and adopted a counter-resolution moved by Jagat Narain that "any proposal to disintegrate India by giving liberty to any component state or territorial unit to secede from the Indian Union or Federation will be detrimental to the best interests of the people of the different states and provinces and the country as a whole, and

the Congress, therefore, cannot agree to any such proposal."

Within a few months, however, the then Congress President, Maulana Azad and Nehru 'clarified' that the Allahabad resolution had not taken away the right of self-determination accorded to the provinces in the resolution at the previous Congress session at Delhi.

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16

Boost to Jinnah by Congress

THE Congress Working Committee meeting at Wardha on 6 July 1942 took a crucial decision: it demanded that British rule in India should end forthwith; or else, the Congress would be compelled to launch a massive people's struggle. The A.I.C.C. meeting in Bombay on 8 August 1942 endorsed the Working Committee's resolution, and gave the green signal to a non-violent national revolt under Gandhiji's leadership. This was the famous 1942 'Quit India' Resolution of the Congress.

Welcome Change in Congress Stance

By this time Gandhiji's fond hopes of making a common cause with Muslims had practically flickered out. He had in June 1940 observed : "The British Government would not ask for a common agreement if they recognised any one party to be strong enough to take delivery. The Congress, it must be admitted, has not that strength today... If it does not weaken and has enough patience, it will develop sufficient strength to take delivery. It is an illusion created by ourselves that we must come to an agreement with all parties before we can make any progress."[1]

By this statement Gandhiji had given up his previous insistence on Muslim co-operation which he had often mentioned after the outbreak of war : "Without a workable arrangement with the Muslims, civil resistance will be resistance against the Muslims."

This welcome though belated realisation of the hard reality of the unholy British-League axis was reflected in the 1942, 'Quit India' resolution also. The resolution recognised that "the solution for the communal tangle had been made impossible by the presence of the foreign power whose long record has been to

pursue relentlessly the policy of divide and rule. Only after the ending of foreign domination and intervention, will there be an agreement between different classes and communities."

At long last the Congress had in so many words accepted that the Hindus alone could be relied upon for achieving Independence and that they could succeed in it in spite of Muslim opposition. The tragic part of this, however, was that the Congress did not pursue to its logical conclusion this basic reality of the national situation and proceed to rouse, mobilise and organise the Hindu masses on the basis of unadulterated and pristine nationalism of this land.

The Hindu Mahasabha stood by the Congress in demanding the quitting of British. "But," Savarkar warned, " 'Quit India' should not result in 'Split India.' "

The Government moved swiftly. Gandhiji and all members of the Congress working Committee were interned. Congress Committees were banned and prominent Congress leaders all over the country thrown behind bars. Serious and violent outbursts followed. The people were electrified with the call of freedom and by slogans like 'do or die', 'this is the final struggle', etc. Non-violence was thrown to the winds. Violence and destruction raged on a large scale. Later on, Nehru conceded that these violent outburts had indeed the blessings of the Congress. However, the Government came down with a heavy hand and the movement lost much of its force by the end of October. It was patent that the Congress had thrown an open challenge to the British, but without adequate preparation. The Congress had not cared to take into confidence the other freedom-loving and patriotic forces in the country before taking that final plunge. After his release, Gandhiji clarified that the quit notice he had issued to the British was "not a threat but a cry."

Jayaprakash Narayan in a secret circular under the title 'To All Fighters of Freedom' candidly admitted the failure of the open rebellion attributing the failure to 'absence of efficient organisation of the national revolutionary forces and of further plan of action for the people and lack of work in the Indian Army and in the Services."[2]

British – League – Communist Hook-up

The Muslim League meeting at Bombay on 20 August

condemned the Congress civil disobedience movement as a blackmail to coerce the British to transfer power to Hindu Raj. It demanded from the British Government an immediate declaration guaranteeing Muslims the right of self-determination and a pledge that they would give effect to Pakistan scheme. The League further appealed to the United Nations to come to its aid :

"Having regard to the oft-repeated declarations of the United Nations to secure and guarantee the freedom and independence of the smaller nations of the world, the Working Committee invites the immediate attention of the United Nations to the demand of 100 millions of Muslims of India to establish sovereign States in the zones which are their homelands and where they are in a majority."[3]

Jinnah pursued his anti-Congress tirade relentlessly. As a counterblast to the Congress slogan of 'Quit India', he raised the counter-slogan of 'Divide and Quit.' The League also formed an Action Committee to mobilise the Muslims for a mass struggle to achieve Pakistan. It had declared that it would attain its goal even by 'taking the issue to the streets,' if necessary.

At this juncture Jinnah found a strange bed-fellow in the Communists. When the World War had broken out, the Communist Party of India had adopted an anti-imperialistic posture and joined the popular movement of Congress posing as freedom fighters.

The reason was obvious. Hitler had entered into a pact with Stalin in August 1939. And anti-British stance fitted into the Communists' line of the Russian slavish camp. However, when Germany invaded Russia in June 1941, and Russia aligned herself with Britain, the C.P.I. dutifully took up the same tune. Their key slogan now became "Make the Indian people play a people's role in the people's war." The Government lost no time in setting free the Communist leaders and began showering favours on them and using them as a counterblast to the Congress.

The 'imperialist war' had overnight turned into a 'people's war' and the 'sworn enemies of imperialism and capitalism' had become their most obedient propagandists.

M. R. Masani, quoting from a press interview by S. S. Batlivala, a former member of the Central Committee of the Com-

munist party, says: "Batlivala then proceeded to refer to a confidential file of correspondence during years 1942, 1943 and 1944 between P.C. Joshi, the Party's General Secretary, and Sir Reginald Maxwell, Home Member of the British Government of India, which he had seen. According to him, that correspondence, if published, 'would conclusively prove' that an alliance existed between the Politbureau of the Communist Party and the Home Department of the Government of India, by which Mr. Joshi was placing at the disposal of the Government of India the services of his Party members'. Batlivala asserted ... that the various political drives undertaken by the Party in the name of anti-fascist campaigns were a part of the arrangement which helped the Government of India to tide over certain crises.

"Batlivala's statement then went on to make the serious charge that P. C. Joshi had 'detailed certain Party members, ... to be in touch with the Army Intelligence Department and supplied the CID Chiefs with such information as they would require against nationalist workers who were connected with the 1942 struggle or against persons who had come to India on behalf of the Azad Hind Government of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose." Joshi had also offered 'unconditional help' to the Government of India and the Army GHQ even to the point of getting these freedom fighters arrested. These men were characterised by Joshi in his letter as 'traitors' and fifth-columnists'.

"On the industrial front, the communists, using the control they exercised over the AITUC, similarly exerted their utmost to keep the workers out of the national unrest. The Party which had called for strikes, strikes and more strikes now demanded work, work and no strikes. ... The peasants were similarly asked to shelve all their grievances and grow more food and surrender it all to feed the armies."[4]

The Communists had not stopped at supporting the Muslim League in their Partition demand. It had directed a large number of its Muslim members to Join the Muslim League to provide 'intellectual muscle' to the two-nation theory. It went still further and began planting seeds for further dismemberment of the country by propagating that every linguistic group was a distinct national entity and had the right to secede.

With the Congress in exile, the field became clear for the combined machinations of British - League - Communists

gang-up to subvert the cause of India's freedom and integrity.

Moves of Sind League Ministry

The first 'official' demand for Pakistan came from the Sind Legislative Assembly on 3 March 1943. How ironic that a province whose formation the Congress had blessed should have been the first to demand Partition ! Allah Bux, a "nationalist Muslim" leader in Sind, abstained himself from the Assembly on the day the resolution was passed. Only some Hindu legislators opposed it. In ringing tones, Savarkar warned the Hindus:

"Now the features of Pakistan delineated on the wall are so bold that even he who runs may read them. Only the blind and cowardly can still indulge in believing that the deadly serpent may yet prove to be a coil of rope."[5]

In fact, the League was trying to kick up an anti-Hindu hysteria among the general mass of Muslims in Sind since after the 1937 elections. In 1939, the League had unleashed widespread riots which had claimed 150 Hindu lives, to which a respected and saintly Hindu poet also had fallen a victim. This was followed by the murder of a Hindu legislator, rendering the position of Hindus still more shaky. Even Gandhiji had, perforce, to advise the Sind Hindus that the only remedy for those who lived in perpetual fear was to migrate.

In June 1943, the League-controlled ministry banned the 14th Chapter of *Satyartha Prakash*. Prior to the imposition of ban, Savarkar had wired to the Viceroy: "I emphatically draw Your Excellency's attention to the contemplated action against the *Satyartha Prakash* by the Sind Ministry. That book is the scripture of the Arya Samajists and is revered by the Hindus in general. Every scripture including the Bible has something to say against other sects or religions. But no Hindu ministry has ever contemplated any action against non-Hindu scriptures."[6] Here again the Congressmen kept mum. When Bhai Parmanand moved an adjournment motion in the Central Assembly over the issue of the ban on *Satyartha Prakash*, the Congress members remained must and neutral. The motion was lost for want of support.

The Sind Muslim League also launched a 'Buy from Muslims' campaign – which in other words amounted to the economic boycott of the Hindus.

C. R. Formula-Rejected by Jinnah

By this time, the 'Quit India' movement having practically been put down and all the Congress leaders including Gandhiji remaining behind bars, political vacuum stared the Congress in the face. Rajaji now picked up the thread of rapprochement with the League. He had, even after being rebuffed by the A.I.C.C., not given up his line. He now launched a propaganda campaign in the Madras Province. When Nehru and other Congress leaders came out heavily on him 'for trying to break the party built with the sweat and sacrifices of thousands', he resigned from the Congress, but would not give up his efforts. He also claimed that he was only voicing aloud what the Congress high-ups were expressing in private. In 1943, he drew up a formula to serve as a basis for an agreement between the Congress and the League. He showed it to Gandniji in the prison while the latter was on a fast, and secured his approval. In April 1944, he communicated the same to Jinnah and held discussions and correspondence with him. The terms of this C. R. Formula were that "the Muslim League should endorse the demand for Independence and co-operate with the Congress in the formation of a Provisional Interim Government for the transitional period; after the termination of the war, a commission should be appointed to demarcate those contiguous districts in North-East India wherein the Muslims were in an absolute majority ; and in those areas there should be plebiscite of all the inhabitants to decide the issue of separation from Hindustan; if the majority decided in favour of forming a separate sovereign state, such decision should be given effect to."[7] Jinnah was delighted to know that Gandhiji had accepted in principle his demand for Partition. But he dismissed the C. R. Formula as offering's a shadow and a husk, a maimed, mutilated and moth-eaten Pakistan.'

There might be some who would like to commend Rajaji for his 'far-sightedness'. He alone, they feel, had the courage and statesmanship to clearly foresee the future course of events and take steps in that direction, while others were yet undecided and wavering. But, Rajaji's venture takes on a different hue when viewed from another angle. Those were the days when the freedom struggle was climaxing to the most crucial stage. The enemies of our national unity were coming up with their various shafts of diplomacy to break it up. The situation required that

all nationalists should close up their ranks and fortify the nation's will to defeat the enemy's designs. Any move to concede the enemy's claim at such an hour, terming it as inevitable, was nothing less than a counsel of despair and an abject surrender. It could have only confused and demoralised the freedom movement. Could such a role be eulogised as a mark of statesmanship by any stretch of imagination ?

Gandhi - Jinnah Talks : A Tragic Step

In May 1944, Gandhiji was released on grounds of ill-health. Soon after, on 17 July, he wrote to Jinnah addressing him as 'brother' and pleaded for a meeting between the two: "Do not regard me as an enemy of Islam or of Indian Muslims. I have always been a servant and friend to you and to mankind. Do not disappoint me."[8]

Jinnah placed the letter before the League Working Committee on July 30. Jinnah observed: "At last – and it is good and conducive to further progress – Mr. Gandhi has, at any rate in his personal capacity, accepted the principle of partition of division of India. What remains now is the question of how and when this has got to be carried out."[9]

Gandhiji himself went to Jinnah's residence and the talks continued for 19 days from 9 September to 27 September 1944. Correspondence followed the talks. While Gandhiji invariably addressed Jinnah as *'Quaid-e-Azam'* (great leader). Jinnah continued to call Gandhiji as 'Mr. Gandhi'.

Gandhiji opened the discussion on the basis of the C. R. Formula. When Jinnah contemptuously turned it down, Gandhiji came forth with a fresh proposal. He prefaced his talk by saying that India was not to be regarded as two or more nations, but as one family consisting of many members. Gandhiji argued, the "two nation theory" based on religion was entirely untenable. He said, "I find no parallel in history for a body of converts and their descendants claiming to be a nation apart from the parent stock. If India was one nation before the advent of Islam, it must remain one in spite of the change of faith of a very large body of her children."[10] However, Gandhiji said, if the Muslims living in Baluchistan, Sind, the North-West Frontier Province, parts of the Punjab, Bengal and Assam, desire to live in separation from the rest of India, these

areas should be demarcated by a commission approved by the Congress and the League and the wishes of the inhabitants should be ascertained through a plebiscite. It the vote was in favour of separation it should be agreed that these areas should form a separate state as soon as possible after India was free.

Jinnah rejected this offer saying that it was opposed to the basic principles contained in the League's Lahore Resolution, i.e., the Muslims in India were a nation having an inherent right of self-determination and they alone – and not all the inhabitants – were entitled to exercise that right. Jinnah also scoffed at Gandhiji's proposal for formation of a separate State after India became free as 'putting the cart before the horse' and demanded a complete settlement immediately and then proceed to secure freedom on the basis of Pakistan and Hindustan.

Jinnah also said 'no' thrice to Gandhiji's suggestion for a Joint Board of Control under treaty of separation to ensure the efficient administration of foreign affairs, defence, communication, customs, commerce etc., as matters of common interest. Jinnah said that these matters being the life-blood of any state could not be delegated to any common central authority. His new state, he said, should be absolutely independent of India with the right to wage war against her, if necessary! When the talks failed, Gandhiji stated that his and Jinnah's viewpoints seemed to run on parallel lines and never touch each other.

All impartial historians and political observers have opined that Gandhiji's gesture to Jinnah at that crucial juncture proved to be extremely costly from the point of view of containing Jinnah's threat. Immediately after Gandhiji's decision to meet Jinnah was known, Shyama Prasad Mookerji wrote to Gandhiji of the dangerous consequences inherent in his move and urged him to abandon it.

Sir Chhotu Ram, who was in Congress and later became the top Hindu leader in the ruling Unionist Party of Punjab, addressed a long letter to Gandhiji (quoted in *Sir Chhotu Ram* by Madan Gopal) detailing the risks involved in carrying on talks with Jinnah in an appeasing tone and on the basis of Pakistan. He warned that the formulae advanced by Rajaji and Gandhiji (*a*) implied the recognition of Jinnah's theory that Hindus and Muslims constituted two different nations, (*b*) recognised Jinnah as the sole representative of the Muslims

and restored the morale of the Muslim Leaguers and demoralised the Muslim allies of the Congress, and (*c*) had buttressed the position of Jinnah who had received a rude shock first in Punjab and then in Kashmir. Chhotu Ram also informed Gandhiji that except for the urban Muslim class, the rural Muslim messes and the fighting men on the front, both Hindus and Muslims, were deadly opposed to them.

Jinnah, at the time when the war commenced, had no control over any of the provincial governments. But the Congress having left the field open to him by resigning from office, Jinnah had, with the support of the ever-willing British, manoeuvred to install League ministries in Sind, Assam, Bengal and N.W.F.P. But even these ministries were far from being stable ; they were precariously balanced out of a chance combination of disparate groups. Khizr Hayat Khan, the premier of the Punjab, though himself a member of the League, refused to convert the Unionist Ministry into a League Ministry.

Thus, Gandhiji's decision to go to the doors of Jinnah at a juncture when the latter's political fortunes were at the lowest ebb and carry on talks with him for 19 days investing him with the title of *Quaid-e-Azam* immensely helped to boost his image among the diverse Muslim groups as the one supreme spokesman of Muslims. Jinnah, who had from the very start set his eyes on that goal, must have found in Gandhiji one who came to his rescue at a time when he was facing the toughest challenge to his political fortunes.

Gandhiji's move shook the Hindu heart to the core. The dreadful prospects of being thrown to the Muslim wolves sent shivers among the Hindus of those areas. There was an uproar from the Hindus of Punjab and Bengal. Chhotu Ram in his letter to Gandhiji had bitterly complained that the Hindus and Sikhs of Punjab were treated as mere chattel and it was a matter of life and death for them. Savarkar denounced the move in incisive tones: "Provinces of India are not the private property of Gandhiji or Rajaji to be gifted away to whomsoever they like."

However, as the situation then stood, Gandhiji was the one pre-eminent leader of Hindus. He had also, times without number, denounced the idea of Pakistan in most unambiguous erms – more so after the Leagues Lahore's Resolution. And now

when people found Gandhiji himself yielding to Jinnah's pressure-tactics, their morale received a mortal blow. No wonder, thereafter, the Congress mind also became attuned accordingly.

Desai–Liaquat Pact : 'Parity' Conceded

When Gandhi–Jinnah talks flopped, 'Bhulabhai Desai, a close confidant of Gandhiji and leader of Congress Central Legislative Assembly, picked up the broken thread and tried to fasten the pieces by a further dose of concession. That was in the beginning of 1945. Except Gandhiji, all other Congress top leaders were yet in jail. Desai held talks with Liaquat Ali Khan, the leader of League's Legislative Party. Desai's formula included, apart from those already conceded by Gandhiji, the altogether new concept of 'Parity' between the Congress and the League in the Central Legislative Assembly ; which, in other words, equated Congress representing 75% of India's population with the League claiming to represent 25%. Indeed a remarkable piece of 'mathematical' statesmanship ! The same doctrine was to hold good in the formation of the Interim Government as well. Desai disclosed that his scheme had the blessings of Gandhiji which in fact it did. For, Gandhiji, on a future date (15 June 1945), issued a statement expressing his approval of the same. Jinnah, however, would not look at this offer also as it did not specifically concede his basic demand of independent state of Pakistan. This time Jinnah adopted a new modus operandi for sabotaging the plan. He simply declared that he knew nothing about it and as such was not a party to it ! Though the Bhulabhai – Liaquat Ali pact fell through, it had served the purpose of the League very well. The League, in all its future parleys with the Congress, would not let go its newly acquired 'right to parity' with the Congress. And the British too picked it up for all their further machinations.

Wavell Plan : Why Jinnah Rejeted It

Viceroy Wavell now initiated the next move in order 'to ease the situation and take India forward on the path of Responsible Government.' He invited Gandhiji and Jinnah and some other prominent leaders of Congress and the Muslim League,

the premiers of provinces and leaders of different Central Legislative parties for a political conference at Simla on 25 June. The Conference was to discuss the proposal for the compossition of an Interim Government in India. A notable omission, among the parties invited, was Hindu Mahasabha. The Government had, by this device, upheld the contention of Muslim League that the Congress was just a Hindu body, obviating thereby the presence of Hindu Mahasabha to speak for Hindus.

The new Executive Council to be formed would, the Viceroy declared, include equal proportion of 'Caste Hindus' and Muslims.

Gandhiji took strong exception to the expression 'Caste Hindus' in the Viceroy's announcement. He also stated that parity between the Congress and the League was understandable but parity between Hindus and Muslims could never be accepted. However, the protest remained only on paper. In practice, the Congress succumbed and the parleys continued. In the final result, the total number of ministers was to be 14, with the Congress and the League contributing 5 each and the rest 4 shared by others, i.e.. Scheduled Castes 2, Sikh 1, and Hayat Khan of Unionist Party of Punjab[1].

Out of the Congress quota of 5, 2 were Hindus and one each of Muslim, Christian and Parsi. The final picture that emerged was : out of a 14–member team 7 were Muslims, 2 each of 'Caste Hindus' and Depressed Classes, and one each of Sikh, Parsi and Christian. Such was to be the wonderful communal composition of the proposed Interim Government which was expected to pave the way for the fulfilment of the future aspirations of the Indian people !

But soon a hitch developed. The British had stipulated that all the 5 representatives of Congress should be 'Caste Hindus'. The League protested that the Congress had nominated a Muslim out of its 5 members, Jinnah's objection came as a surprise to many, because in this allocation the lion's share of 50% had gone to the Muslims, the rest 50% being shared by all others combined together. The Muslims would have been undoubtedly placed in a commanding position in the Government. But Jinnah insisted that the League alone had the right to nominate the Muslim members and not the Congress. The Congress too was not prepared to budge from its position.

The Wavell Plan was thus shoved to the dustbin as were so many other sbefore.

However, Jinnah had very sound reasons for discarding such an apparently alluring plan. He had by his firm stand given notice on all future Muslim aspirants that no Muslim in the Congress or any other party could ever hope to enter the portals of power and that they could ensure their political future only through the League. When journalist Durgadas asked Jinnah why he had spurned the plan when he had won his point of parity, he replied: "Am I a fool to accept this when I am offered Pakistan on a platter?" Durgadas also says that he had learnt from a high official and political source that a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council had sent a secret message to Jinnah through the League contacts he had formed.[11]

Jinnah had publicly advanced one more reason for his rejection of the plan. The League members would only be one-third of the total number. All others would form one bloc as against the League because, he asserted, the Scheduled Castes, the Sikhs, the Christian and the Parsi members would all align themselves with the Congress. As such, the Muslim interests would not be safe. Jinnah described the scheme as a snare and said that its acceptance would be an abject surrender and a death-knell to the Muslim League. By this argument Jinnah had sought to establish a further claim. It was not enough if the League and Congress were accorded parity. Nor would parity between 'Caste Hindus' and Muslims suffice. The Muslim League itself should have a dominant position against all the other communities and parties put together.

The Congress leaders who were by then released were furious at Bhulabhai Desai for having initiated all these moves on their back. As a punishment Bhulabhai was refused a ticket when elections were announced later. All his protestations of Gandhiji's blessings and his written consent, etc., fell on deaf ears. Gandhiji too chose not to come to his rescue. Rebuked and insulted by his own partymen, Bhulabhai who had spent a lifetime as a loyal soldier of the Congress and had been a close associate of Gandhiji felf badly let down. That he had become a scapegoat was too much for him to bear. Already a heart patient, he now succumbed to repeated heart attacks and died a frustrated man – 'unwept, unsung and unhonoured.'

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17

India on Volcano, Britain on Way Out

THE 'QUIT INDIA' movement affected Britain's war efforts in Bharat very little. The British carried on the administration with a firm grip on the situation through the Muslim ministries and English Governors. The Princes stood solidly behind the British. The industrialists and the labour produced the essential commodities and met the needs of war. Even the Khadi Bhandars continued to supply woollen rugs for the soldiers.

League's Appeal Catches On

With the surrender of Japan on 15 August 1945 and the successful close of the war, there was a change of government in Britain. The Labour Party came to power defeating the Conservatives in the 1945 General Elections. For long, the Indian leaders had looked upon the Labour Party as being less imperialistic and more responsive towards the cause of Indian Independence. Soon the Government announced holding of General Elections in Bharat. Elections were to take place by the beginning of 1946. The Muslim League had by then again lost whatever loose control it had manoeuvred to establish over certain provinces. The Muslim members of the Unionist Party had resigned from the League. Dr. Khan Saheb had succeeded in forming a Congress ministry in N.W.F.P. Nazimuddin of Muslim League was defeated in the Bengal Assembly bringing that province under the Governor's rule. The League could carry on the ministry in Assam on the strength of Congress support. In Sind, it had to form a coalition ministry with other groups, as several of its members had defected. Many impartial Muslim leaders of that period had specially noted this feeble position of the League.

However, because of encouragement by the British and

appeasement by the Congress, the Muslim League had acquired the exalted position as the sole representative of Muslims. The League exploited this newly acquired prestige to the full. It painted before the Muslim electorate the goal of League as the establishment of *Dar-ul-Islam* – the Islamic heaven – and roused their religious passions to its white heat. The propaganda tactics of the League soon began yielding rich dividends. Many prominent Muslim leaders from other groups began to troop into the League camp.

The rising tide of the League's appeal severely affected the 'nationalist Muslims' in the Congress also. Their 'convictions' received a big jolt. Abdul Kayyoom Khan of N.W.F.P., a long-time 'loyal' Congressman and the deputy leader of the Congress party in the Central Legislature, crossed floors and joined the League. Iftikhar Uddin, President of Punjab Congress Committee, who later became the editor of *Punjab Times*, was another prominent leader to follow suit.

Those who remained in the Congress became nervous that the Congress could not hope to secure Muslim support if it did not offer them some fresh and tangible assurances. Azad met Gandhiji and urged him to propose three concrete concessions: (1) Parity between Hindus and Muslims in the Central Legislative Assembly and the Interim Government. (2) Prime Minister's post to be held by a Hindu and a Muslim alternately. (3) Freedom to Muslims to decide their status in the future Indian constitutional set-up. It is not known whether the Congress formally discussed Azad's suggestions or not. However, in the resolution it had passed in September 1945 before the elections, the Congress had conceded the right of secession to unwilling parts. The Congress, while reiterating its goal of Independence and its commitment to India's unity, had added the rider that it could not think in terms of compelling the people in any particular territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will.

Crucial 1945-46 Elections

By about the same time, a new dimension was imparted to the national situation when the Government decided upon trying the soldiers of the Indian National Army (INA). About 20,000 of them had fought under the inspiring leadership of Subhas

Chandra Bose for ousting the British from the shores of Bharat. The stirring episodes of these patriotic soldiers of Subhas had electrified the people's mind. The INA trials sparked off intense resentment bursting forth in a wide-spread anti-Government agitation all over the country. Popular demonstrations often accompanied by violence and firing by the police became common. When later on the accused were released, the people gave a tumultuous welcome to them. The drooping spirits of Congress now got the much needed stimulant. It fully exploited the people's mood to mobilise their support in the coming election. The Congress exhorted the people to strengthen its hands in its fight for united Bharat. A number of celebrated non-Congress candidates responded to its call and withdrew from the contest in favour of the Congress. As expected, the Congress swept the polls in all the general constituencies, commanding 91.3% of the polled votes for the Central Assembly. The Muslim League secured 86.8% of votes and triumphed in every single Muslim constituency for the Central Assembly. The 'nationalist Muslims' of Congress forfeited their deposits in several constituencies. The Congress could not even field a single Muslim for the Central Muslim Constituency.

As regards the Provincial Assemblies: In both Assam and N.W.F.P. the Congress came out victorious. Out of the 30 successful Congress candidates in N.W.F.P., 19 were Muslims. The League could secure just 17. In Punjab, the Congress, the Unionist Party, and the Akalis formed a coalition party under Khizr Hayat Khan. In all these areas most of the Muslim seats were captured by the Muslim League. In Sind and Bengal the Muslim League came to power with the support of other groups and 8 independents. All other provinces remained solidly with the Congress.

The elections had brought out the comparative strengths and weaknesses of the Congress and the Muslim League. The Muslim League, in spite of its resounding success in most of the Muslim constituencies, could succeed in assuming ministerial reigns only in two provinces – namely Bengal and Sind – out of the five (the Punjab, N.W.F.P,, Baluchistan, Bengal and Sind) which it had claimed for Pakistan. There also it had to depend upon other parties and European members for its survival.

The British – League hook-up was blatantly in evidence

in these elections. Gaffar Khan told Gandhiji of how and in what blatantly partisan manner the British had backed the League. The president of Sind Muslim Jamait, Sheikh Abdul Majeed, charged that the elections in Sind were a big farce. He also accused the Government officials of collusion with the League in ensuring the victory of its candidates. Fazl-ul-Huq complained to Gandhiji about the unbridled rowdyism at the election meetings unleashed by the Leaguers. The Government gave no protection to the non-League candidates. He, a former premier, himself had become a target of brutal violence and managed to escape "by the skin of his teeth" by taking shelter in a Hindu house.[1]

The League leaders, intoxicated by the victory at the polls, now became openly bellicose. At the convention of the League legislators, "Ismail Chundrigar of Bombay said the British had no right to hand over the Muslims to a subject people over whom they had ruled for 500 years. Mohammed Ismail of Madras declared that the Muslims of India were in the midst of a *Jihad*, a holy war. Shaukat Hayat Khan (a Minister in Khizr Hayat Khan's war-time Cabinet, later dissmised) said if Muslims were 'given a chance', they would 'show a rehearsal now when the British army is still there'. Sir Feroze Khan Noon thundered that if they were driven to fight a central government or Hindu raj, then the havoc which the Muslims will play will put to shame what Chengiz Khan or Halaku did."[2]

Army and Police in Ferment

As days passed, the British grip on India became increasingly feeble. Several factors contributed to this crucial development – the most important being the serious drain of Britain's resources brought about by the Second World War. The economic and military sinews of Britain had reached the nadir. The internal atmosphere in Bharat too was hotting up. The march of the liberating army of Subhas Bose and the subsequent Azad Hind Trial had inflamed not only the general masses but even the Indian Army with the spark of freedom.

An incident of far-reaching impact occurred right at this moment. 3,000 Royal Navy ratings in Bombay rose in a massive revolt. The civilian population too caught the spirit. V. P. Menon, a top civilian officer in the Centre at that time,

says: "On 18 February 1945 the ratings of the Bombay Signal School resorted to a hunger strike in protest against untold hardships regarding pay and food and the most outrageous race discriminations, particularly against their commander's derogatory references to their national character. They were joined later by ratings from other naval establishments. These persons got completely out of hand. They took possession of some [20] of the ships, mounted the guns and prepared to open fire on the military guards. A very ugly situation developed. Admiral Godfrey, Flag Officer Commanding, Royal Indian Navy, broadcast to the ratings calling upon them to surrender. At the same time efforts were made to secure guns and planes and to rush reinforcements to the scene.... It was due largely to the efforts of Vallabhbhai Patel that, on 23 February, the ratings surrendered. In the meantime, contrary to the advice of Congress and Muslim League leaders, Strikes and hartals were organised in Bombay and unruly crowds went about looting and setting fire to banks, shops, post offices, police posts and grain shops. The police had to open fire several times and the military had to be called in to assist before order could be restored. Over 200 persons were killed as a result of these disturbances."[3] The railway employees also struck work in sympathy.

The Bombay uprising had its serious repercussions in as distant and prominent centres as Ambala, Karachi, Madras, Calcutta and Rangoon. The Army and the Air Force too were affected. A number of Air Force personnel revolted against their English Commanders and struck work as a mark of support to their naval compatriots.

The Police too were not totally free from the winds of change blowing all over the country. Police in Delhi had gone on a rampage giving anxious moments to the Government. Ramanand Tiwari, a constable from Bihar, had organised an underground network of patriotic policemen, sparking off police revolts in several places.

At Jabalpur 200 men belonging to the Indian Signal Corps went on a lightning strike to protest against the condemnation by the Commander-in-Chief of the RIN strike and mutiny. When the Government attempted to celebrate the V-Day, there were serious riots at Delhi on March 7 and 8.

"There were attacks on Europeans in many towns. On February 22, representatives of a number of organisations of the Anglo-Indian and domiciled European community in Bengal issued an appeal to the leaders of all political parties to foster among their followers a spirit of tolerance and goodwill towards them. During recent disturbances in the city, they stated, they were violently attacked by the Hindus and the Muslims alike, their women were stripped in the streets, their defenceless homes invaded, and their places of worship desecrated. Denying that they were hostile to the Indian freedom movement, they said that they too had their grievances against the powers that be, though they did not ventilate them through processions. They concluded by an appeal to the members of their own community to cultivate goodwill and friendship with fellow Indians and to instil in the community a spirit of patriotism towards 'this, our country and home.' "[4]

The British, surely enough, found in these incidents ominous portents for their future in India. Giving out his mild analysis of the Viceroy's assessment of the situation obtaining then, V. P. Menon says: "The Viceroy was confident that in any conflict with the Congress, he could count generally on the support of the officials, the Police and the Army. At the same time, it would be unwise to try the Indian Army too highly in the suppression of their own people, and as time went on the loyalty of even the Indian officials, the Indian Army and the Police might become problematical. A large number of British officials would probably take the first opportunity to retire, so that the British Government in India would be placed in a quite untenable position unless in found a very early solution, and this it should do at any cost."[5]

British Decide to Quit

The decision of the British Government, announced on the very next day of the Bombay Naval revolt, to send a Mission of three Cabinet Ministers-Pethick-Lawrence, A. V. Alexander and Stafford Cripps-to India was born precisely in this background. The statements of the Secretary of State in early 1946, such as "1946 will be a crucial year in India's history", and again "This year, in the course of the next few months, we hope to make a stride forward and put India in

a new position which will mark a milestone in the history of the freedom of the world," conveyed that the British had made up their minds about quitting Bharat. Their decision was based on the close observations of the Parliamentary Delegation which visited Bharat during that period. Attlee's remarks in the House of Commons on 15 March on the Cabinet Mission's visit were pregnant with indications about their future policy regarding India.

Attlee said that the tide of nationalism was running very fast in India and that it was time for clear and definite action. The Cabinet Mission was going to India in a positive mood. The temperature of 1946 was not the temperature of 1920, 1930 or even 1942. His colleagues were going to India with the intention of using their utmost endeavours to help her attain freedom as speedily and as fully as possible. What form of Government was to replace the present regime was for India to decide, though he hoped that India would elect to remain within the British Commonwealth. In conclusion he said, "We are mindful of the rights of the minorities and the minorities should be able to live free from fear. On the other hand, we cannot allow a minority to place their veto on the advance of the majority."[6]

The reference to the 'minority' in the last portion of Attlee's speech came as a severe shock to Jinnah. He protested that the Muslims were a 'nation' and not a mere 'minority'. Moreover, there was no reference in that speech to their demand for Pakistan. Jinnah declared that the League would have nothing to do with the framing of the new Constitution if it was to be for a single union. The Congress and other political parties were no doubt pleased to find a healthy change in the tone of Attlee's announcement.

Cabinet Mission's Plan : Implied Perils

The salient features of the new Constitution recommended by the Cabinet Mission were : (1) There would be a Union of India comprising both British India and the princely States, which would deal with the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications with necessary power to raise required finances. (2) All other subjects and residuary powers would vest in the provinces or the Princely States. (3) All the provinces would be grouped

in two parts : one comprising the Hindu-majority provinces and the second Muslim-majority provinces.

The recently elected legislators would elect from their respective Provincial Assemblies their representatives community-wise. General (all others except Muslims and Sikhs), Muslim and Sikh, were the three classifications. These representatives would sit in three Sections as follows :

Section A – Madras, Bombay, United Provinces, Bihar, Central Provinces and Orissa.

Section B – The Punjab, North-West Frontier Province and Sind.

Section C – Bengal and Assam.

These three Sections of the Constituent Assembly would decide the provincial constitutions for the provinces within their group ; provinces would have the power to opt out of the groups by a decision of their new legislature after the new Union Constitution came into force. After the group constitutions are settled the three Sections of the Constituent Assembly would re-assemble, together with representatives of the Indian States, for the purpose of settling the Union Constitution.

The ingenious nature of this grouping of the Hindu-majority provinces and the Muslim-majority provinces of British India had placed 19 crores of Hindus on an equal footing with 9 crores of Muslims in the Central Government and Central Legislative Assembly – the principle of 'parity' in action ! The power to frame the provincial constitutions was given to the Sections which in effect placed the fate of N.W.F.P. and Assam at the tender mercies of their respective Muslim-majority groups. The Central India Union was to be a weak centre with Muslims sharing equal power with the Congress and the field left free for establishment of Muslim domination over all the areas envisaged under the Pakistan scheme. Gandhiji at the very first sight of the plan wrote to Cripps saying that this plan was far worse than the Pakistan scheme.

This is what Cripps himself told Jinnah when the latter asked him how Pakistan would come under the proposed all-India Union. "There are two propositions – a small Pakistan with sovereign rights and a treaty relation, and a larger Pakistan which would function together with Hindusthan on terms of equality within an all-India Union for the essential purposes of

defence and foreign affairs. Under the second alternative, there would be two federations linked by a Union Centre. The Indian States would come in either at the Union or at the federation level and there would be equal representation of Hindusthan and Pakistan at the Union level. The communal balance would be retained at the Centre by some means even if the Indian States came in."[7]

The Congress also criticised the plan as embodying an impractical scheme and revolting against all democratic norms. However, the Congress accepted it, probably with the hope of changing the whole set-up at the constitution-making stage.

Viceroy Wavell invited the Congress and Muslim League Presidents for talks on the basis of the Cabinet Mission Plan. The Congress President was at that time Maulana Azad and Jinnah flatly refused to talk with him. He had reprimanded Azad saying "Can't you realise, you are made a Muslim show-boy Congress president to give it the colour that it is national and deceive foreign countries? You represent neither Muslims nor Hindus. The Congress is a Hindu body. If you have self-respect, resign at once." Congress bowed to Jinnah's obduracy and deputed Nehru as the 'representative of the President.' Congress did not appear to mind the gross insult to its President implied in Jinnah's demand.

One more blow awaited the Congress. Whereas the Muslim League was allowed to nominate a non-Muslim member in the Central Interim Government, the Congress proposal to nominate a 'Nationalist Muslim' as its representative was turned down.

Azad Shocks Gandhiji

During this period (the last week of 1945), the dubious role played by Maulana Azad makes a shocking episode. Pethick-Lawrence had written to the Congress and League Presidents inviting them for talks at Simla on the basis of a scheme, which incorporated the non-inclusion of a nationalist Muslim of Congress in the Cabinet. However, even before the Congress Working Committee discussed the letter, Maulana Azad, without the knowledge of the other Congress leaders including Gandhiji, communicated the Congress acceptance of the scheme.

In that letter, Azad had assured the Cabinet Mission that he was confident of carrying the Congress with him, in spite of whatever internal differences there were inside the Congress, and that the Mission need not worry too much about Gandhiji or his misgivings about the Mission's proposals.

When this was disclosed to Gandhiji, "The effect on him was devastating." Cripps handed over the letter to Gandhiji.

This is what followed, as graphically described by Sudhir Ghosh in his *Gandhi's Emissary:* "Setting on the floor of his little room in the Bhangi Colony, Gandhiji read the letter and as he put it down on the little desk in front of him, it was announced that Maulana Saheb had arrived. ... They (Rajkumari and Pyarelalji) both heard Gandhiji ask Maulana Saheb a straight question whether he had written any letter to the Viceroy about the negotiations that were going on. The Maulana flatly denied having written any letter at all. He did this while the letter in original was lying in front of Gandhiji on his little desk at a distance of two or three yards from the spot where Maulana Saheb was sitting. ...What deeply upset Gandhiji was that a life-long colleague to whom he had such unflinching loyalty could be so untruthful... "

When Azad later on admitted to Gandhiji that he had suppressed the truth from the latter, but insisted that it was done with the best of motives, Gandhiji told him with deep distress that he was hardly prepared to hear such defence from the lips of a strict Muslim and a religious divine like him.

Subsequently, the Congress Working Committee unanimously opposed acceptance of the scheme – the only dissident being Maulana Azad.

Nehru's Analysis of the Plan

The Congress Working Committee, meeting on 6 July 1946 at Bombay, decided to abstain from the Interim Government but consented to take part in the Constitution-making process.

Nehru in his concluding address to the Committee had said: "So far as I can see, it is not a question of our accepting any plan, long or short. It is only a question of our agreeing to go into the Constituent Assembly. That is all and nothing mire than that. We will remain in that Assembly so long as we think it is good for India. We will come out when we think is injurious

to our case and then offer battle. We are not bound by a single thing except that we have decided for the moment to go to the Constituent Assembly."

Again speaking at a press conference later, Nehru affirmed the Congress view; "We will be entirely and absolutely free to determine what we have to do there; we shall be solving the problem of minorities on our own and we shall not accept any oustside interference; the big probability is that there will be no grouping of provinces.

".... But it seems to me rather fantastic for the Cabinet Mission to tell us that after ten years we are going to do this or that. .... When India is free, India will do what she likes."[8]

Nehru's views were entirely in line with Gandhiji's reactions which he had expressed soon after the announcement of the Cabinet Mission Plan.

It was clear that these views of the congress clashed directly with the League's interpretation of the Mission's Plan. And as we shall presently see, the future triangular wranglings centred mainly round this controversy.

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18

League's "Direct Action"

It is small wonder that Nehru's forthright comments on the Mission's Plan brought forth immediate rebuttal from Jinnah.

Jinnah found in it the undoing of his own designs in accepting the Plan. Jinnah had consented to the Plan on the assumption that it contained "germs of Pakistan." The League had stated in its resolution of 6 June that 'the basis and foundation of Pakistan were inherent in the Plan by virtue of the compulsory grouping of the six Muslim provinces in Sections B and C.' The League had also proclaimed that "its participation in the Constituent Assembly would ultimately result in the establishment of a complete sovereign Pakistan, keeping in view the opportunity and the right of secession of provinces or Groups from the Union which have been provided in the Mission's Plan by implication."

All this made it amply clear that the League only viewed the Mission Plan as an instrument to secure the bigger Pakistan, that could not be secured immediately.

Jinnah, true to his style, protested to the Mission members that Nehru had repudiated completely the basic form of the long-term scheme and all the obligations and rights of the parties concerned, to which Pethick-Lawrence and Stafford Cripps issued clarifications which were, in fact, more confusing than clarifying. The All-India Muslim League meeting at Bombay on 27 July charged the Cabinet Mission of breach of faith with the Muslim League with a view to placating the Congress. It declared that it was left with no alternative except to pursue once again its 'national goal of Pakistan.' Obviously, the League had realised that the Congress had seen through its game and was bent upon frustrating it.

Calcutta Carnage

The League now gave call to the Muslims to observe August 16 as 'Direct Action Day': "The Muslims of India would not rest contented with anything less than the immediate establishment of independent and fully sovereign state of Pakistan... Now the time has come for the Muslim Nation to resort to direct action."

Speaking after the adoption of the resolution, Jinnah declared: "We have taken a most historic decision. Never before in the whole life history of the Muslim League did we do anything except by constitutional methods and by constitutional talks. ... Today we have said good-bye to constitutional methods. Throughout the painful negotiations the two parties with whom we bargained held a pistol at us-one with power and machine-guns behind it and the other with non-co-operation and the threat to launch mass civil disobedience. This situation must be met. We also have a pistol."[1]

And this was how Jinnah used the pistol: As August 16 approached, meetings, processions, call for *jehad* against Hindus and for uprising against the Government regulations-all these were unleashed by the League in all big cities and towns. League Ministries in Bengal and Sind declared a holiday on 16 August. The Bengal premier H. S. Suhravardy threatened to declare Bengal independent in case power was transferred to the Congress at the Centre.

The high percentage of Muslims in the Police force in several provinces added a new dimension to the looming threat of August 16. In Sind and Punjab the Muslims formed 70 per cent, and in U.P. and Bengal 50 per cent of the police. Only N.W.F.P., with the Congress firmly in the saddle and the League's influence feeble, appeared to be comparatively safe. In all the rest of the provinces, the flaming tongues of League spread fast and wide.

When pressmen questioned Jinnah whether his "farewell to all constitutional methods" implied taking to violent means, Jinnah crisply replied that he did not want to go into the moral niceties of violence and non-violence.

The stage for the gruesome Calcutta killing was set by the premier of Bengal, Suhravardy, who also held the Home portfolio, himself taking the lead. Notorious Muslim hood-

lums in and around Calcutta were mobilised and supplied with fire-arms and other deadly weapons. Ration coupons for petrol were freely issued to them despite serious shortage of petrol. The goonda gangs in Howrah were guided directly by Sheriff Khan, the Mayor of Calcutta. Hindu officers in 22 out of 24 police headquarters were replaced by Muslim officers, the remaining two headquarters being headed by Anglo-Indians.

The morning of 16 August witnessed the dreaded mammoth march of the League with cries of *'Ladh ke lenge Hindusthan'* (fighting we shall take Hindusthan). At the meeting which followed under the presidentship of the premier, speaker after speaker swore death and destruction for Hindus. *Jehad* on the *kafirs* was declared and the dispersing mob let loose a veritable hell on the Hindus with murder, loot, arson, and rape on a scale reminiscent of the bygone days of barbaric Islamic invasions. The orgy continued without let or hindrance for full two days. Calcutta reeled and lay prostrate writhing in agony. Whoever was apprehended indulging in criminal acts was immediately ordered to be set free by the premier himself who sat in the police control room and directed the operations. The English Governor F. Burrows sat like a statue in his chambers, 'seeing no evil' and 'hearing no evil'. The wailings of Hindus before him and the other Government authorities fell on deaf ears. The Hindus realised that their fate would be sealed unless they struck hard in self-defence. They now became fully roused, and the tide was turned with equal fury against the Muslims. The Governor, seeing the Muslims at the receiving end, now felt the 'call of duty' and called the army to quell the riots. The number of men, women and children slaughtered on the streets of Calcutta was over 10,000 and the seriously maimed and injured 15,000 and those rendered utterly penniless and homeless 1,00,000. A British correspondent of *Statesman*, Kim Christen, wrote: "I have a stomach made strong by the experience of war, but war was never like this. This is not a riot. It needs a word found in mediaeval history, a fury. Yet 'fury' sounds spontaneous and there must have been some deliberation and organisation to see this fury on the way."[2]

The culpability of Suhrawardy in this sordid affair was laid bare by the local Army Commander and the Chief Secretary of

the Bengal Government before Lord Wavell, when the latter visited Calcutta in the last week of August.

As events turned out, the League's surmise about the outcome of their Calcutta carnage was falsified. The ruffian army of the League, abetted and assisted by the Government and the police, did not after all succeed in browbeating the Hindus. The 'meek Hindu' had displayed his traditional valour and put the League's forces to rout.

Jehad in Noakhali

The League now shifted its arena of operaion to Noakhali and Tipperah where the Hindus were in a hopelessly small minority. The fury of *jehad* let loose on the Hindus there defied description. Genocide and conversion of Hindus accompanied by molestation, kidnapping and forcible marriage of Hindu ladies with Muslims raged on for days and weeks. The League also extracted 'donations' from Hindus for filling its coffers !

From a relief centre in an East Bengal village, Miss Muriel Lester wrote on 6 November 1946 : "Worst of all was the plight of women. Several of them had to watch their husbands being murdered and then be forcibly converted and married to some of those responsible for their death. Those women had a dead look. It was not despair, nothing so active as that. It was blackness..... the eating of beef and declaration of allegiance to Islam has been forced upon many thousands as the price of their lives... perhaps the only thing that can be quite positively asserted about this orgy of arson and violence is that it is not a spontaneous rising of the villagers."[3]

V. P. Menon writes : "In about the second week of October 1946, there was a large-scale outbreak of lawlessness and hooliganism in the Noakhali and Tipperah districts of East Bengal. Large forces of armed police and military had to be employed to control the situation. Referring to these disturbances, a prominent politician, who himself hailed from East Bengal, reported that whereas the lawlessness had been given the colour or pure goondaism, in fact it was not so; it was an organised attack engineered by the Muslim League and carried out with the connivance of the administrative officials. The attacks, he said, were made by the people armed with guns and other deadly weapons, roads had been dug up and other

means of communication cut off to prevent ingress and egress ; canals had been blocked and strategic points were being guarded by armed insurgents."[4]

When Acharya Kripalani and his wife Sucheta went on a healing mission to the riot-ravaged villages in Noakhali, the latter carried a capsule of potassium cyanide, just in case. She carried it in her subsequent tour with Gandhiji also. Kripalani met the Governor to appraise him of the pitiable condition of Hindus in Noakhali and urged him to initiate stern measures. The Governor laconically replied that the premier (who was also present there) had reported to him that the situation was well under control and peace and order had returned to Noakhali ! When Kripalani pointedly referred to the large-scale abduction of Hindu women, the Governor cheekily replied that it was quite natural since Hindu women were more handsome than their Muslim counterparts. Kripalani, on hearing that, "felt like hitting him."[5]

The death-dance of destruction and devastation carried out by the Muslims under the banner of Muslim National Guards followed a set pattern in all places. The prominent Hindu leaders and landholders were chosen as their first targets for liquidation. It was the signal for plundering of all Hindu houses, arson, conversion of Hindu males and molestation and abduction of Hindu females. *Mullahs* and *maulvis* also accompanied the Muslim thugs to carry out the 'religious rites' of conversion.

Shyama Prasad Mookerji was the first to reach those riot-ravaged areas to organise self-defence among the Hindus and offer them succour. Gandhiji too moved to Noakhali and Tipperah to quench the fires and wipe the tears of the Hindus. However, within two months, news reached him that Bihar was in flames as a reaction to the Calcutta and Noakhali carnages. Gandhiji soon rushed to Bihar to calm down the Hindu fury.

Bihar and Bengal Riots : A Study in Contrast

A common notion seems to have gained currency that the Bihar Hindus had wreaked vengeance on the local innocent Muslims, and that they had proved to be as much brutes as the Muslims of Noakhali. The facts, however, tell a different story. We can do no better than quote here the revealing details

furnished by Kripalani. Tracing the genesis of the Bihar troubles, he says :

"On the 24th (October 1946) Diwali was to be celebrated by the Hindus as "Dark" Diwali, a mourning day, in sympathy with the sufferers in Bengal. In Chapra a local Muslim leader exhorted his followers to 'rejoice' by illuminating their houses. On the 25th when a meeting was held by the Hindus to protest against the happenings in Bengal, riots broke out in all their intensity and ferocity and raged for five days... "[6] "Communal tension had been growing for some time past. The Muslim League, infuriated at the success of the Congress Ministry, had let loose insidious propaganda of 'atrocities' committed on the Muslim minority in the Congress-governed provinces. They also published a mendacious report called the 'Pirpur Report' which helped to inflame the sentiments of both Hindus and Muslims.

"Also, during the 'Quit India' movement there was a great upheaval in Bihar. At that time the attitude of the Muslim League was such that the general opinion was that it stood as a 'barrier to the freedom struggle.' This had made the Muslims unpopular.

"In Calcutta riots, as we have seen, at first the Muslims had the upper hand. The labouring class of Hindus from Bihar had greatly suffered at the hands of Muslim rioters. They brought with them harrowing accounts of their experience. This excited the anger of the Hindus. At this time a pamphlet purporting to have been issued by some League leader was distributed in Bihar. It contained instructions 'to kill the Hindus.' Hindus believed that the Muslims were planning some mischief in Bihar. On top of this, an unfortunate incident occurred in Muzaffarpur towards the end of September. It was reported that a Hindu girl abducted from Calcutta was brought to Bihar and kept confined in the house of a local Muslim. The Hindus tried to persuade him to release the girl. Failing in this, the crowd went to search the house. But they found that the man had disappeared along with the girl. At this the crowd lost control and wreaked vengeance on the local Muslims by looting and burning their houses and killing some of them. So far as the League Government in Bengal was concerned, it had helped the Muslim rioters. It roused

itself only when the Hindus took action on their own. In Bihar the Hindus being in the majority did not wait to be attacked by the Muslims."[7]

Kripalani then presents the glaring contrast in the actions of the Government and other Central leaders in Bihar with those in Bengal. In Bihar it was not like the communal Government of Bengal celebrating the Direct Action Day against the Hindus to secure Pakistan. The Central leaders like Pandit Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and Kripalani had at once rushed there to see that peace was restored and the displaced Muslims returned to their homes. Kripalani further says :

"The Viceroy no more prevented the Central Government from acting on the plea of provincial autonomy... When we rebuked the people for what they had done they did feel ashamed. The police repeatedly resorted to firing to quell the rioting .... Those who raided Muslim houses were not accompanied by *sadhus* and *sannyasis*; they were not fighting a *jihad* as the Muslims were doing in Calcutta, Noakhali and in the North. It was collective revenge coupled with the apprehension that if they did not take the offensive there would be no protection for them.... While the Hindus in Noakhali would not get encouragement from Gandhiji's visit to return to their homes, the same cannot be said of the Muslims in Bihar... At Gandhiji's suggestion, at many places the Hindus went to the camps and brought back Muslims to their village homes. Hindus contributed funds to the rehabilitation of Muslim refugees. Hindu women donated their ornaments to Gandhiji for the purpose and fed and looked after Muslims.

"The work of relief and rehabilitation that was going on was now placed under a Muslim Minister, Abdul Qayum Ansari. Gandhiji's work was, however, made difficult by the attitude of the Muslim League workers. The Government of Bihar, as a gesture of goodwill, had handed over the camps to be run by the volunteers of the League. Soon the camps became the hot-beds of intrigue, and the work of rehabilitation was hampered greatly as they prevailed upon the refugees not to go back to their homes. The Muslim League Ministry of Bengal also did all in its power to prevent the Muslim refugees from returning to their homes in Bihar. They wanted to draw as large a number of Bihari refugees as possible to Bengal in order

to settle them in the bordering districts where the Hindus were in a majority."[8]

From the foregoing account by Kripalani, it is not merely the comparative attitudes towards the Hindu and Muslim interests by the League ministries as well as the British Governors and Viceroy, which stand exposed; the blatantly anti-Hindu and pro-Muslim bias had been the recurring theme of their joint policy all along. The real shocking aspect of the whole affair was the similar predilection displayed by our own national leaders as well. Not a single top leader of the Central Government had cared to reach Bengal, whereas a host of them had descended on Bihar post-haste. (Gandhiji and Kripalani who had toured East-Bengal were not representatives of Government.) The Government had resorted to all measures including firing and even bombardment from air to put down the Hindu rioters. The Hindus who had been suffering and sacrificing in the cause of Independence were sought to be suppressed and humiliated and the League bullies protected and pampered by them. And, unfortunately, it was this kind of national leadership of ours which was required to face the combined threats and machinations of the Muslim League and the British – their two sworn adversaries in their struggle for Independence of United Bharat.

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Deadlock Complete

THE CONGRESS and the League had each stuck to its own version of the Cabinet Mission proposals. The chief bone of contention between the two lay in the question whether the provinces after their grouping had the right to quit the groups or not. The Congress in an attempt to resolve the deadlock relented from its stand and suggested that the question be referred to the Federal Court for arbitration at the time of taking up that clause in the drafting of the Constitution. But the League refused to leave anything to chance. It insisted on a firm commitment here and now both from the Congress and the British in favour of its interpretation. Then only would it accept the Mission's Plan. Neither the Congress, nor the British, were however prepared to go so far as that. And the League decided to stay out of the Plan.

The British, however, were not in a position to just shelve the whole exercise and sit back watching the fun. That stage had passed. The compulsions of post-war developments (as we shall shortly see in detail) had left them with no such luxurious options.

The British had to act, and act swiftly. Viceroy Wavell invited Nehru, as the President of Congress, to form the Interim Government, ignoring League's boycott and the Plan controversy. (Nehru had been picked by Gandhiji for the Congress presidentship for that crucial year, even though his name had not been proposed by any of the Provincial Committees. Patel, whose name was unanimously proposed by several Provincial Committees, stepped aside as a dutiful soldier in deference to Gandhiji's wishes.) The stipulation by the Congress of including a Muslim in the Cabinet also was not objected to by the Viceroy.

League's Sabotage From Inside Government

This altogether new and unexpected step of the Viceroy severely jolted Jinnah out of his sense of security. He moved quickly to thwart the advantage gained by the Congress. A call was given to Muslims to fly black flags on September 2, the day when the Interim Government under Nehru was to take charge, "to register the Muslim Nation's silent contempt at the installation in office of the Hindu Congress and the satellites." As a dreadful warning to the Muslims aspiring to power through Congress, Shafaut Ahmed Khan, the Congress nominee to the Government, was brutally done to death.

Further, sensing that this new development would spell diasaster to his future plans, on 13 October 1946, Jinnah wrote to the Viceroy :

"My Committee have, for various reasons, come to the conclusion that in the interests of Mussalmans and other communities it will be fatal to leave the entire field of administration of the Central Government in the hands of the Congress. Besides you may be forced to have in your Interim Government Muslims who do not command the respect and confidence of Muslim India, which would lead to very serious consequences; and, lastly, for other very weighty grounds and reasons which are obvious and need not be mentioned, we have decided to nominate five on behalf of the Muslim League."[1]

As a counterblast to the nomination of a 'nationalist Muslim' by the Congress, Jinnah included a Hindu Harijan – Jogendranath Mandal – in the League's quota of five. Both Nehru and Gandhiji felt annoyed at this tactics of League and expressed their fears that the League's entry into the Government was not straight, that it indicated a desire for conflict and confrontation rather than co-operation. Further, the League had not committed itself about its participation in the long-term process of constitution-making. The League also refused to heed to the Congress demand for its withdrawal of the Direct Action programme before joining the Government. The Viceroy, too, simply overlooked all these obstructionist tactics of the League. In fact he had himself made behind-the-scene moves to bring the League into the Cabinet. Wavell had declared, after his visit to riot-scarred Calcutta, that the Muslim League would have to be involved somehow or other in the Government if similar

disasters were not to be repeated in future. Thereby he had offered cover to the League's crimes in Calcutta, by implying that the League if denied partnership in the Government had a right to indulge in such carnages.

The one over-riding consideration behind the decision of Muslim League in joining the Government was laid bare by the League leaders themselves :

"On October 19, Ghaznafar Ali Khan who was to join the Interim Government on behalf of the Muslim League said during his address to the students of Islamia College at Lahore : We are going into the Interim Government to get a foothold to fight for our cherished goal of Pakistan, and I assure you that we shall achieve Pakistan.... The disturbances which have occurred in many parts of the country after the installation of the purely Congress Government at the Centre have established the fact beyond any shadow of doubt that the ten crores of Indian Muslims will not submit to any Government which does not include their true representives. ... In the Interim Government, all our activities shall be guided by two considerations, that is, to convince the Congress that no Government in India can function smoothly without the co-operation of the Muslim League, and that the Interim Government is one of the fronts of the Direct Action campaign and we shall most scrupulously carry out the orders of Mr. Jinnah on any progress in India without a settlement between the Congress and the Muslim League on the basis of Pakistan."[2]

League's intention soon became apparent. Finance was in the hands of Liaquat Ali Khan. The main thrust of the budget he prepared was to deal a crushing blow to the Hindu businessmen who formed the financial backbone of the Congress. Every policy and decision of Liaquat Ali was such as to create trouble for Congress from inside the Government. In fact, when Congress insisted on having the Home portfolio and the League opposed it, Chaudhury Mohammed Ali (who later became Pakistan Premier), who was in the Central Secretariat, advised the League leaders to accept the key portfolio of Finance.

Moulana Azad writes : "When Liaquat Ali became the Finance Member, he obtained possession of the key to Government. Every proposal of every department was subject to scrutiny by his department. In addition he had the power of

veto. Not a chaprasi could be appointed in any department without the sanction of his department."[3] Liaquat would even conduct independently meetings of the League members in the Cabinet. Nehru reported to the Subjects Committee of the Congress about the 'mental alliance between the League and the senior British officials.' He charged that the Viceroy 'was gradually removing the wheels of the car, leading to a critical situation'."

The League, while engineering such anarchic conditions inside the Government, stepped up its Direct Action carnage outside. The League's members in the Government themselves were indulging in open incitement to Muslims. One even declared that the happenings in East Bengal were just a prelude to the all-India battle for Pakistan. As a result, flames of Muslim fury soon enveloped the whole of northern Bharat. At places, Hindus too hit back with equal ferocity.

British – League Axis at London

The Viceroy went ahead with the constitution-making process and sent invitations to all the concerned parties for the meeting of the Constituent Assembly. However, the League refused to join it unless its declared position vis-a-vis the question of the provinces was accepted. It was the Sections, the League argued, which had the right to frame the provincial and the group constitution. The Congress, too, stuck to its previous position, that read as a whole the plan had given to the provinces the right to decide both as to their grouping and as to their constitutions.

With a view to thrashing out a common agreed interpretation, on the personal invitation of Prime Minister Attlee, Nehru, Baldev Singh, Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan flew to London, accompanied by Wavell. While on the one hand it upheld the League's stand, it conceded the Congress demand for referring the issne to the Federal Court if the Constituent Assembly so desired.

Jinnah was, evidently, not satisfied. He wanted the Government to clarify what would be its stand in case, the Court's verdict went contrary to its interpretation. The Secretary of State told him that they would, in that case, have to consider the whole position *de novo*. And this he said in the presence of

Nehru. Nehru, too, was now disillusioned with the London exercise and said the Congress too would have to consider afresh the situation in its entirety. Baldev Singh said that the Sikh position had been made worse and they too would be withdrawing from the Constituent Assembly in case the Federal Court's ruling went in line with the British Government's interpretation.

The British tactics at disrupting the nationalist camp by instigating the Sikhs to break away from Congress also came to light at this juncture. Devinder Singh Duggal writes : "When ... Nehru decided to return to India, some influential members of the British Cabinet conveyed to Sardar Baldev Singh that if he stayed behind, arrangements might be made 'so as to enable the Sikhs to have political feet of their own on which they may walk into the current of world history.'

"Sardar Baldev Singh lost no time in divulging the contents of this confidential offer to Nehru and, in compliance with the latter's wishes, declined to stay back. He flew back to India with Nehru, with the following message for the Press : 'The Sikhs have no demand to make on the British except the demand that they should quit India. Whatever political rights and aspirations the Sikhs have, they shall have them satisfied through the goodwill of the Congress and the majority community'."[4]

While Nehru and Baldev Singh flew back to Bharat immediately after the London talks, Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan stayed back for some time in England to carry on a virulent campaign there through public speeches, for creating a favourable climate for Pakistan demand. Jinnah also brandished the threat of civil war in case his demand was not met.

Churchill–Jinnah Axis

Just recently – in 1981 – fresh light has been thrown by the Attorney General of Pakistan, Sharifuddin Pirzada, on the secret parleys held between Jinnah and Churchill during the days of the former's stay in London. Churchill had then suggested that in future the two should correspond under assumed names.

Presiding over a function in connection with Jinnah's birth anniversary, Mr. Pirzada said that he had found an envelope in Jinnah's papers containing a chit with the name of a

British woman and her London address. He later learnt that the woman was actually Sir Winston's Secretary. Sir Winston had said he would sign in her name while sending cables to Jinnah. Mr. Pirzada reproduced the facsimiles of the chit and Sir Winston's letter to Jinnah .

"Dear Mr. Jinnah,

I should gratefully like to accept your kind invitation to luncheon on December 12. I feel, however, that it would perhaps be wiser for us not to be associated publicly at this juncture.

I gratefully value our talk the other day and now enclose the address to which any telegrams you may wish to send me can be sent without attracting attention in India. I will always sign myself 'Gilliutt'. Perhaps you will let me know to what address I should telegraph to you and how you will sign yourself. Believe me. ...Yours sincerely, (*sd*) Winston Churchill."[5]

This gives as hint as to how, as the days for the transfer of power approached, the British imperialists were pulling strings from behind the curtain.

Khaliquzzaman writes : "During his stay in London, Mr. Jinnah was able to gather from most responsible quarters that in case the Congress did not agree to accept the cabinet Mission Plan *in toto* without putting its own interpretation on the document, the British Government would reluctantly agree to patrition the country."[6]

During his stay in London, Jinnah attended a luncheon party in Buckingham Palace. He found that the king was pro-Pakistan and the Queen was even more so – 100 per cent pro-Pakistan !

Deadlock Complete

The League's Direct Action campaign raged on unabated. One gets a peep into the havoc wrought by the Muslims in the north in Kripalani's writings : "The situation created in the N.W.F.P. and the Punjab had become serious. Riots broke out first in N.W.F.P. and thereafter spread to the whole of the Punjab. On our way to Kashmir (in May 1947) we stopped at Lahore and from there went up to Rawalpindi. We found intense apprehension among the Hindus because the Muslim leaders were openly and boastfully talking of using violence against the Hindus. In the Rawalpindi district, we found

widespread destruction. Every Hindu and Sikh public building in that city had been turned into a refugee camp. We saw a house where the children from the village had collected and which had been set on fire. We saw the bones of the little ones.

"In a village called Thoa Khalsa, after a prolonged fight between Hindus and Sikhs on one side and Muslims on the other, when all men belonging to the Sikh and Hindu communities were killed, seventy-four women and girls and children decided to save their honour by jumping into the well of a house where they had all collected for safety. Led by the wife of the owner of the house, Smt. Lajwanti, all of them jumped into the well after reciting *japji*. We were shown the well and given photographs showing it full of dead bodies.

"We were informed that when some local leaders approached a highly-placed British official for protection, he said, 'Go to Gandhi, he will come to your help.' "[7]

Though the Constituent Assembly continued to function with the Congress participating in it, and the League boycotting it, it was clear that it had become defunct for all practical purposes. The Congress now impressed upon the British Government that the Muslim League had forfeited its right to be a partner in the Interim Government in view of its boycott of the Constituent Assembly and carrying on of its Direct Action holocaust in the country. The Congress threatened to quit the Government in case the League members were not asked to resign.

The deadlock was complete.

Crucial days were fast nearing, when all the three parties – the British, the Congress and the League – were to be called upon to match their strategic skills against one another.

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Leader's Minds Prepared for Partition

THE ANNOUNCEMENT made by the Prime Minister Attlee in the British Parliament on 20 February 1947, with a view to resolving the impasse, indicated an altogether new and unexpected turn in the British policy :

New Turn in Britain's Policy

"His Majesty's Government desire to hand over their responsibility to authorities established by a constitution approved by all parties in India in accordance with the Cabinet Mission Plan. But unfortunately there is at present no clear prospect that such a constitution and such authorities will emerge. The present state of uncertainty is fraught with danger and cannot be indefinitely prolonged. His Majesty's Government wish to make it clear that it is their definite intention to take the necessary steps to effect the transference of power to responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948. ...

"But if it should appear that such a constitution will not have been worked out by a fully representative Assembly before the time mentioned in paragraph 7, His Majesty's Government will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over, on the due date, whether as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India, or in some areas to the existing provincial Governments, or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people."[1]

Before closing his statement Attlee had also announced the appointment of Earl Mountbatten as the next Viceroy of Bharat to succeed Wavell. Attlee made a special mention that the change was being made at the moment of opening of a new and final phase in Indian developments.

Attlee's statement contained both the assurance of the quitting of the British and the distinct possibility to the division of the country into two or even more divisions.

Nehru, welcoming the announcement as 'wise and courageous', said :

"The clear and definite declaration that the final transference of power will take place not later than June 1948 not only removes all misconception and suspicion, but also brings reality and a certain dynamic quality to the present situation in India. That decision will undoubtedly have far-reaching consequences and puts a burden and responsibility on all concerned. It is a challenge to all of us and we shall try to meet it bravely in the spirit of that challenge. I trust that we shall all endeavour to get out of the rut and end the internal conflicts that have frustrated our efforts and delayed our advance and accept this burden and responsibility keeping only the independence and advancement of India in view."[2]

Brave words indeed !

Jinnah, true to his style, made no comments except saying that the League would not budge an inch from its demand for Pakistan.

The Congress Working Committee meeting on 8 march 1947 welcomed the British Government's statement and demanded the partition of Punjab and Bengal on religious lines. It had also invited the League for mutual parleys 'to devise means for a peaceful and swift transfer of power to the advantage of all.'

By demanding the Division of the two provinces on religious basis, the Congress gave the hint that it had in principle accepted the demand of Pakistan and prepared to negotiate with the League on that basis. However, Jinnah did not respond. He knew that instead of carrying on direct talks with the Congress, depending upon the British to do the bargaining for him would be more paying.

The Congress line of reasoning in this regard was indicated by Patel in a letter he wrote to one of the working Committee members :

"If the League insists on Pakistan, the only alternative is the division of the Punjab and Bengal ... I do not think that the British Government will agree to division. In the end, they will see the wisdom of handing over the reins of Govern-

ment to the strongest party. Even if they do not, it will not matter. A strong Centre with the whole of India – except East Bengal and part of the Punjab, Sind and Baluchistan – enjoying full autonomy under the Centre will be so powerful that the remaining portions will eventualy come in."[3]

Both Nehru and Patel surmised that by this counter-strategy Jinnah would be paid in his own coin ; he would be made to realise that his argument would be turned against him ; that what would be left to him ultimately was the 'truncated, mutilated, moth-eaten Pakistan' which he had scornfully refused to look at some years ago.

Mountbatten arrived in Bharat on 22 March 1947. A member of the English royal family and naval commander, Mountbatten was by all accounts a charming and impressive personality. The personal friendship he had previously forged with Nehru was another factor which was to stand him in good stead in the crucial days ahead. The friendship had started from the day Nehru had flown to Malaya, shortly before the close of war to unveil a memorial to the Indian Army. Mountbatten who was the British Commander there, on a secret word from Wavell, arranged a grand reception to him at Singapore, himself keeping company in the colourful procession. Mountbatten knew that shortly Nehru was going to be invited to head the Interim Government of India.

Mountbatten had arrived with the set goal of dividing Bharat and creating an independent state for the Muslims. The British policy of 'divide and rule' became luridly manifest even in the very last act of their imperialist rule over the country. They knew that a free and undivided Bharat, with its huge population, vast territory and unbounded resources, would surely become a world power in its own right. Britain would become a dwarf before that gaint, unable to bend it to her will in all future international developments. Creation of a new state – grateful and obedient to Britain – on Bharat's borders, with its daggers always drawn against her, would keep her down not only militarily and economically but make her toe an obedient line to Britain.

Mountbatten applied himself to his present diplomatic assignment with the dynamism and precision of a military commander. Even before he could go through the formal oath-

taking ceremony as the Viceroy, he invited Gandhiji and Jinnah to Delhi and held talks with them. He then had detailed discussions with Nehru and Patel. The first round of talks was evidently to probe the minds of Indian leaders, without giving any inkling of his own thinking in the matter.

Gandhiji "Politically Dead"!

Gandhiji in his very first interview with Mountbatten repeated his firm opposition to Partition. To this Mountbatten countered by holding out prospects of a bloody civil war in case any decision against Jinnah's wish was taken. His Majesty's Government would, he said, never allow him to hand over the colossal minority like the Muslims to the power of the Congress.

As an alternative to Pakistan, Gandhiji put forth a novel proposal. In substance he told the Viceroy: You dismiss the present Cabinet and give Jinnah the option to form his interim cabinet – leaving the choice of members entirely to him. The members might all be Muslims or otherwise – it does not matter. If Jinnah accepts the offer, Congress would assure him of its whole-hearted co-operation. The only condition is that his policies should be such as to ensure the interests of the entire Indian people. Let Jinnah disband the Muslim National Guards and bring about communal peace. Let him also have the liberty to plan for Pakistan and put his plans into effect before the transfer of power, provided he does not take recourse to force. If Jinnah refuses, you make the same offer to the Congress. The sole referee to decide what is or is not in the interest of India as a whole will be yourself – Mountbatten – in your personal capacity.

However, the Congress leaders rejected the plan outright. Gandhiji had carried out several rounds of talks with Nehru and other Working Committee members but failed to convince them. Nehru remarked that Gandhiji was rapidly getting out of touch with events at the Centre. Gandhiji wrote to the Viceroy stating that since his plan did not find acceptance with the Congress, he was handing over the charge of all future negotiations to the Congress Working Committee. Jinnah also had rejected out of hand Gandhiji's proposal denouncing it as 'mischievous'. With Gandhiji voluntarily retiring from the scene and proceeding to

Noakhali and later on to Bihar, the field was now left clear for Mountbatten to deal directly with Nehru and Patel. At this Sarojini Naidu said with tears in her eyes : "Gandhiji was politically dead. He sees in front of him the debris of his life-work."[4]

Patel and Nehru Accept – Why ?

Patel was so fed up with the League's tactics inside the Interim Government that he saw nothing but endless intrigue and troubles ahead in any kind of working with the League ; it was better to have a clean separation rather than have pinpricks everyday.

Nehru too had lost all hopes of joint action with the Muslim League in any kind of arrangement ; the League would never see eye to eye with the Congress on any of the issues. He felt despairingly that there was no way out except Partition.

Rajendra Prasad came out with the same explanation : "It was the Working Committee, and particularly such of its members as were represented on the Central Cabinet, which had agreed to the scheme of partition ... (They) did so because they had become disgusted with the situation then obtaining in the country. They saw that riots had become a thing of everyday occurrence and would continue to be so ; and that the Government ... was incapable of preventing them because the Muslim League Ministers would cause obstruction everywhere ... It had thus become impossible to carry on the administration."[5]

However, by far, the most important factor appears to have been that our leaders had become tired old men and could no more stand the prospect of going to prison again in case they had stood out for a united Bharat. (Nehru's actual words in this regard are quoted in Chapter 26).

Why Maulana Azad Opposed Partition

Special mention has to be made here of the opposition put up by Azad to the Partition proposal. However, the reasons for his opposition were different : "I was and am still convinced that the Cabinet Mission Plan was the best solution from every point of view ... *Even from the communal point of view, Muslims could expect nothing better.* They would have complete internal autonomy in provinces in which they were in a majority. Even

in the Centre they would have more than adequate representation."[6] (Emphasis ours)

A clearer insight into the working of Azad's mind is furnished by his caustic comments on the post-partition policy of Muslim League : "The action of the Muslim League in driving almost all the Muslim officers out of India was not only foolish but harmful. In fact it was more harmful to the Muslims than to India as a whole. Now that partition had been accepted and Pakistan was being established, it was clear that the Muslims would get every advantage in the new State. If, in addition, some Muslims could have served in India, this would not only have been of personal advantage to them but would have been a great gain for the community as a whole. The presence of Muslims in some responsible positions would have given assurance to the community and allayed many unreasonable fears. I have already said how foolishly the League had acted in insisting on partition. The League's attitude towards Muslim officers was another example of the same foolishness."[7]

'Partitioning' Pakistan

With Nehru and Patel finally acquiescing to the demand for Pakistan, the atmosphere, especially in the north, began to hot up as never before. Hindus in Punjab and Bengal rose in protest and demanded that in case Partition was accepted, their provinces too would have to be partitioned. Shyama Prasad Mookerji, leader of Hindu Mahasabha, took the lead in rousing the Hindus to insist on the retention of East Punjab and West Bengal in Bharat. The Sikhs' demand for division of Punjab was such that it could not be brushed aside on any account. The Provincial Congress Committees of Punjab and Bengal raised their voice in support of division of their respective provinces. On 20 April Nehru declared in a public speech that the League could have Pakistan provided it does not lay claim to other parts of Bharat which did not like to opt for Pakistan.

Rajendra Prasad as the President of the Constituent Assembly made an authoritative pronouncement before the Assembly on 28 April : "While we have accepted the Cabinet Mission's Statement of May 16, 1946 ,which contemplated a Union of the different provinces and States within the country, it may be that the Union may not comprise all provinces. If that unfortunately

comes to pass, we shall have to be content with a constitution for a part of it. In that case, we can and should insist that one principle will apply to all parts of the country and no constitution will be forced upon any unwilling part of it. This may mean not only the division of India, but a division of some provinces."[8]

Jinnah, as could be expected, reacted violently to this mounting demand for the partition of Punjab and Bengal. He threatened that, in that case, he would demand the vivisection of other provinces also. The Muslim League Committees of Bombay and U. P. passed resolutions demanding the right of self-determination to certain Muslim-majority pockets in these provinces. To this Rajendra Prasad countered with the argument that whereas the demand for partition of Punjab and Bengal was in line with the Lahore resolution of the League which called for the separation of such areas as were contiguous and having a Muslim majority, the League's demand for areas which were neither contiguous nor having Muslim majority could never be claimed for Pakistan.

By about the same time, Jinnah came up with a new demand for an 800-mile-long corridor connecting West and East Pakistan. *Dawn,* the mouthpiece of Muslim League, carried on a blistering campaign towards that end. However, Jinnah himself was only too well aware that there was not a ghost of a chance of either the Congress or the British accepting that outrageous demand. Jinnah had obviously indulged in that propaganda stunt just to add weight to his claim at the bargaining counter and carry the Muslims in the non-Pakistan areas also along with him.

With the proposals of "Independence" looming large before their eyes, certain provinces too began to clamour for the same. In N.W.F.P. the cry was for independent Phaktoonistan, and in Punjab it was for 'Khalistan' for the Sikhs. The Bengal premier, Suhravardy, who had fallen from Jinnah's grace and found no prospects of office in the future Pakistan, raised the slogan of "sovereign, independent and undivided Bengal." Sharat Chandra Bose, the left-wing Congress leader of Bengal, too joined the chorus. However, since neither of the two major parties, the Congress and Muslim League, cared to pay any heed to these demands, they remained still-born.

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"Amen" to Partition

MOUNTBATTEN, on the strength of his assessment of various divergent and conflicting groups, had formulated his strategy and prepared a plan for the transfer of power. The plan further modified by the British Government had given up the basis of all of its previous proposals of transferring power to a United India. The new scheme envisaged that with the lapse of British paramountcy the various provinces would become entirely independent. They would then be free to enter into independent treaties, presumably with the British Government also. At the very first sight of it, Nehru became furious. He rejected it out of hand as a scheme of Balkanisation of India, a breakdown of central authority and an invitation to civil strife, violence and disorder. It was a scheme which would create so many 'Ulsters' in India and looked upon as so many British bases on the Indian soil. He also condemned 'self-determination' in the case of Baluchistan as preposterous. N.W.F.P. was another strategic frontier province which had been given an opportunity to reverse its present position.

Partition Plan Finalised

V. P. Menon [now came forward with a draft plan which envisaged the ascertaining of the wishes of the people by a specified procedure whether there should be Partition or not, and transferring power to one or two Central Governments as the case may be on a Dominion Status. In the event of Partition, demarcation of boundary and division of armed forces were to be effected; and Mountbatten was to be retained as the common Governor General for both the Dominions.

This plan found general acceptance with the Congress, the Muslim League and other groups. The British Government,

too, approved the plan and finalised its statement. And Mountbatten presented it to the Indian leaders on 2 June.

A question arises why the British Government put forward, in the first instance, such monstrous proposals which they knew would be totally spurned by the Congress leaders? Why had they not right away proposed Menon's formula, which had been discussed with Mountbatten and put across to the British Government even while Wavell was the Viceroy? The only motive could be to browbeat the Congress leadership, by confronting it with this terrible alternative, into opting for Partition and Dominion Status, and a common Governor General during the transition period.

The plan – which became famous as Mountbatten Plan – had incorporated the principle of partition. The procedure to be followed to effect it was as follows :

(1) The Provincial Legislative Assemblies of Bengal and Punjab (excluding European members) to meet in two parts, one representing the Muslim-majority districts and the other the rest of the province. The 1941 Census figures were to be the basis for determining to which part the district should belong.

(2) The two parts sitting separately would vote whether the province should he partitioned; if a simple majority of either part favour separation, division would take place.

(3) The Sind Assembly would be given the opportunity to opt out of the present Indian Union.

(4) Referendum will be held in N.W.F.P. to indicate its choice either to remain in India or join Pakistan and a similar opportunity to be afforded to Baluchistan.

(5) Referendum to be held in the Sylhet district of Assam to choose between remaining in India or joining Eastern Pakistan.

The Congress Working Committee meeting on 2 June accepted the plan on condition that the Muslim League too would accept it *in toto* without any 'ifs' and 'buts'.

Mountbatten, after his interviews with the leaders, met Gandhiji the same day and explained to him patiently and persuasively the various steps which had led to the present position. It was Gandhiji's day of silence. However he wrote on bits of paper conveying that he had not so far uttered a word against Mountbatten in his speeches, thereby indicating

that the latter need not have apprehensions that he would be opposing the plan.

Why the League Accepted the Plan

When Mountbatten met Jinnah on 2nd night, the latter told him that though he was hopeful of getting the approval of the All India Council of the League, it was not constitutionally possible for him to give his assent. He would require, he said, at least a week's time for the Council to assemble. Mountbatten bluntly told him that a week's delay at that stage might well prove fatal to the whole plan. Mountbatten warned him that if he betrayed any ambivalence in the next day's Council meeting, the Congress and Sikh leaders too would withdraw their assent; that could only result in all-round chaos; and Jinnah would lose for ever the chance of securing Pakistan.

According to Allan Campbell-Johnson, the press attache to Mountbatten, "When Mountbatten came back from London at the end of May 1947, he had returned armed with a vital message, which he can use at his discretion, from Mr. Churchill to Jinnah, which states that it was nothing less than a matter of life and death for Jinnah to accept the Plan."[1] Of course, Jinnah was not a political innocent not to realise the opportunities as well as the risks involved in that critical situation. He just made a feint that he was making a concession. Of course, Mountbatten, as was the practice of all Viceroys before him, was only too willing to come to his rescue at all such critical moments.

Mountbatten said, "Mr. Jinnah! I do not intend to let you wreck all the work that has gone into this settlement. Since you will not accept for the Muslim League, I will speak for them myself. I will take the risk of saying that I am satisfied with the assurance you have given me. I have only one condition, and that is that when I say at the meeting in the morning, 'Mr. Jinnah has given me assurances which I have accepted and which satisfy me,' you will in no circumstances contradict that, and that when I look towards you, you will nod your head in acquiescence."[2]

Accordingly, at the crucial conference of the Viceroy with the leaders on 3 June, Mountbatten and Jinnah went through the drama. The Congress too signified its concurrence with the

Plan. The same day Attlee made the official declaration of the Plan in the House of Commons, which therefore came to be known as the "June 3rd Plan."

Broadcasts by Mountbatten and the Indian leaders on the All India Radio followed. Mountbatten, describing that occasion, says; "The faces of the Muslim Leaguers when Nehru talked about allowing parts of India to secede from the Union were matched only by the expression of dismay on the faces of the Congress members."[3]

Gandhiji Withdraws Opposition to Partition

On 4th Mountbatten met Gandhiji just before the prayer metting. Campbell-Johnson says: "Mountbatten urged Gandhiji to consider the Announcement not as a Mountbatten but as a Gandhi Plan; in all sincerity he had tried to incorporate Gandhi's major concepts of non-coercion, self-determination, the earliest possible date of British departure, and even his sympathetic views about Dominion Status."[4]

Gandhiji who had been preaching at his prayer meetings against Partition in trenchant tones, however, changed his stance at the prayer meeting that day: "The British Government is not responsible for Partition. The Viceroy has no hand in it. In fact he is as opposed to a division as Congress itself. But if both of us, Hindus and Muslims, cannot agree on anything else, then the Viceroy is left with no choice. It is on the basis of this plan alone that an agreement could be reached."[5]

When, however, Gandhiji commended the same for acceptance by the people, someone in the meeting reminded Gandhiji about his famous statement "Vivisect me before vivisecting the motherland," Gandhiji replied: "When I made that statement I was voicing the public opinion. But when the public opinion is against me, am I to coerce it?"[6] It is indeed amazing to hear this explanation from Gandhiji. For, it was just a few days earlier that, while retorting to Mountbatten's taunt that "Congress is with me and not with you," he had said, "Congress may not be with me, but India is with me."

However, this statement of Gandhiji about the public opinion being in favour of Parition was obviously not in keeping with facts. Partition had been brought about by an unholy

alliance of the terrorist tactics of the League, the imperialist British strategy, and the 'tired old men' of the Congress – all the while keeping the people in the dark about what was cooking behind their back.

Benumbed Mental State of Congress

Apart from the acceptance of the principle of Partition, it is really shocking that the Congress had not raised even its little finger against such features of the Plan as were patently and outrageously unjust and harmful to India. Kripalani's admission in this regard throws lurid light on the utterly benumbed mental state to which the Congress leadership had been reduced :

"The Working Committee met in a tense atmosphere. Everybody felt depressed at the prospect of the partition of the country. The Viceroy's proposals were accepted without much discussion. As a matter of fact, Jawaharlal and Vallabhbhai were already committed to the acceptance of the proposals. There was no critical examination. For instance, in Sind where there was a League Ministry, the decision of accession to Pakistan was left to the Assembly. In the North-West Frontier Province, where there was a Congress Ministry in office, this decision was not left to the Assembly, but there was to be a referendum of the people to ascertain anew their preference. Again, while the Sylhet district of Assam having a Muslim majority was carved out of the province for ascertaining the will of the people, the same choice was denied to the district of Tharparkar in Sind on the borders of Rajasthan where there was a Hindu majority. It was quite natural for our foreign masters to ignore all these inconsistencies in order to favour the League; one cannot understand why we of the Working Committee did not even draw their attention to these important details."[7]

Curtain Drawn on the Final Act

The A.I.C.C. met in Delhi on 14-15 June to pass the resolution for acceptance of June 3rd Plan. Govind Ballabh Pant, who moved the resolution, said the plan opened the only way to achieve freedom and liberty for the country. Between 'June 3rd Plan and suicide', he said, they had chosen the former. Azad reiterated that the Cabinet Mission Plan would have been the

best in the situation. However, he too appreciated "the need for an immediate settlement" and hoped that "the partition was going to be a short-lived one."

Choitram Gidwani criticised the resolution as a surrender to League's tactics of violence. Jagat Narain Lal reminded the A.I.C.C. of its unequivocal declaration in May 1942 of its opposition to any plan of Partition, and declared that it could not go back on it.

The Socialists in the Congress had all along bitterly opposed Partition. However, they did not raise any voice of protest at the meeting. Acharya Narendra Deo and Ram Manohar Lohia had already stated in their Executive Committee meetings that though they were opposed to Partition they would neither oppose nor table amendments to the C.W.C. resolution, because the Partition plan had already become a fact. Strange logic indeed !

Among the top Congress leadership, it was Babu Purushottham Das Tandon who firmly stood out against the resolution till the very last. In a voice charged with emotion he said that the resolution was a counsel of weakness and despair. The Nehru Government, he said, had been unnerved by the terror tactics of the Muslim League and acceptance of Partition would be an act of betrayal and surrender. Tandon concluded his speech with the impassioned appeal, "Let us rather suffer the continuation of the British rule a little longer than sacrifice our cherished goal of united India. Let us gird up our loins to fight, if need be both the British and the League, and safeguard the integrity of the country."

The loud applause which greeted Tandon's speech sounded a note of warning to the Congress leadership. The dying embers of faith in the hearts of Congress members had been stoked and the fate of the resolution hung in the balance. It was at this crucial moment that Gandhiji intervened.

Kripalani says, "There was strong opposition to the resolution headed by Purushottham Das Tandon, but Gandhiji himself advised the members to accept the decision of the Working Committee, though he personally thought no good would come out of it. He asked them to trust their leaders. The resolution might not have been passed but for Gandhiji's advice."[8]

Allan Campbell-Johnson has noted in his diary :

"At the decisive moment Gandhi came down in favour of acceptance and the latent opposition among the more communally-minded members of the Congress High Command could not take shape against the frail little man's massive authority."[9]

V. P. Menon too says that "the issue was clinched when Gandhiji supported the resolution."

To many, it appeared a paradox that Gandhiji who had been a confirmed opponent of Partition should have chosen at the most critical hour to put his full weight behind its votaries and silence its opponents. Gandhiji's arguments on that occasion ran on the following lines : The acceptance of the Plan involves not only the Congress Working Committee ; there are two other parties – the British Government and the Muslim League. If at this stage, the A.I.C.C. were to reject Congress Working Committee's decision, what will the world think of it ? The consequences of rejection will entail the finding of a new set of leaders who will have to constitute the new Working Committee and also be capable of running the Government. Maintaining peace in the country is very essential at the present juncture. Congress has been all along opposed to Pakistan ; and I too have steadfastly opposed it. Yet I have now to urge for its acceptance. Sometimes certain decisions however unpalatable have to be taken.

At the close of his speech Gandhiji said, "Wouldn't I do it (oppose it), if only I had the time ? But I cannot challenge the present Congress leadership and demolish the people's faith in it unless I am in a position to tell them 'Here is an alternative leadership.' I have not the time left to build up such an alternative. It would be wrong under the circumstances to weaken the present leadership. I must therefore swallow the bitter pill." He also added : "I have not that strength today. Or else I would have declared rebellion single-handed."[10]

Apropos Gandhiji's foregoing remark, it is interesting to recall Nehru's talk with Leonard Mosley. After giving out his reasons for acceptance of Partition, Nehru said : "But, if Gandhiji had told us not to accept partition, we would have gone on fighting and waiting."[11]

Gandhiji's intervention having put the final seal, the resolution was carried by 157 votes to 29, with 32 members remaining neutral.

The curtain was thus drawn on the final act of the tragic drama of Partition – with the supreme representative body of the nation, the Congress, capitulating on the most basic and vital issue of national unity and integrity.

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22

Fraud Played on Bharat

JINNAH, even after accepting the June 3rd Plan in general terms, tenaciously pursued his objective to the last detail. While the Congress had readily accepted Mountbatten as the Governor General of Bharat, Jinnah kept everybody guessing. It was fully one month later, on 2 July, that he intimated to the Viceroy that he himself would be the Governor General of Pakistan. At the same time, he had desired that Mountbatten would stay on as Bharat's Governor General! Jinnah had patently side-tracked the express provision in the Menon Formula, to which he had agreed, of having a common Governor General for both the Dominions.

By this move, Jinnah had scored a double advantage. On the one hand he was left unfettered to pursue all his future manoeuvrings against Bharat, while at the same time Bharat was put under the restaining hand of a third party. The fact that Jinnah and Attlee and even Churchill had sent special messages to Mountbatten to remain as Bharat's Governor General only confirmed the advantages that were likely to accrue to Pakistan and Britain by this arrangement.

Jinnah also turned down the eminently wise suggestion of Ismay, Chief of Mountbatten's Staff, that "both the new Governments should have an instrument on which they could rely in the early days of their nationhood," and that "the Indian Army as at present constituted was ideal for their purpose."

But Jinnah would not accept power on August 14 "unless he had an army of appropriate strength and predominantly Muslim composition under his control." This insistence of Jinnah, again, as ensuing developments have shown, was in accordance with his future designs against Bharat.

Motive Behind Urgency : Fear of Nation's Resistance

Between the date of announcement of Partition, 3 June, and 15 August, hardly 72 days were left for carrying out the stupendous task of division of the vast country. The problems to be faced were many and intricate : division of the Army and Police, deciding the rival claims of assets and liabilities, demarcation of boundary, and last but not the least, the resulting colossal human problem.

How is it that Mountbatten, a seasoned commander and a diplomat, came to take this clearly perilous course? All through his interviews with the leaders, Mountbatten was particularly stressing upon the need to go through the whole operation with the utmost despatch. Though the time-lag in the original proposition by the British Government for the completion of the scheme was up to June 1948, Mountbatten advanced the date of transfer of power by more than ten months and announced the date as 15 August 1947 – the date on which Japan had surrendered two years ago.

Leonard Mosley gives the clue to the real motives behind Mountbatten's decision : "Having proved to his own satisfaction that the Indians were largely paper-tigers when confronted by the right kind of bluff, the Viceroy gathered his British staff around him and told them to rush through the details of the Draft Scheme for Independence without delay. The idea was to jostle a settlement through before either the Congress or the Muslim League had too much time to think about it, and *before any really effective opposition to the partition of the country had time to develop.*"[1] (Emphasis ours)

What, in the eyes of Mountbatten, could have been that factor which if allowed time would have snowballed into a 'really effective opposition'? It lay in a basic element of the nation's mind. The people had no doubt implicity trusted their leaders in the struggle for independence. They had firmly believed in their brave words of safeguarding the nation's integrity. However, their first and foremost point of devotion was their motherland. The Congress leadership had captured their imagination precisely because of this factor. They had, in the people's eyes, become the champions of the country's freedom struggle.

But once they knew that they were going to be betrayed, resentment would have grown. It was quite likely that the

mounting pressure of nationalist forces would have made the leaders review their decision. It is to this aspect that Leonard Mosley has referred, when he said, "before the Congress had too much time to think about it." The overwhelming response evoked by the impassioned call of Tandon, even in A.I.C.C., was a clear pointer to this probable development. There was one more factor. Almost all the Indian Army Officers – both Hindu and Muslim – were strongly opposed to Partition. General Habibullah was one such, ane he had made serious attempts to contact his colleagues in a bid to stall Partition. Added to this, the general atmosphere in the country, in the wake of the I.N.A. trials and naval revolt, was surcharged with a revolutionary fervour which was predominantly nationalist and would not have brooked Partition.

The partition of Punjab and Bengal was again another serious factor which would have generated a growing opposition to June 3rd Plan. The life of Hindus and Muslims had been so inextricably woven together there that the realisation of the consequences of tearing them apart would have led to a storm of protest from even among the Muslims. Writes Khaliquzzaman :

"After the Congress decision on partition of the provinces, it (demand for Pakistan) had become a live issue ; for a news item published in the Civil and Military Gazette of Lahore dated 25 March 1947 reported : 'Sir Khizar Hayat Khan, former Premier of the Punjab, is opposed to the division of Punjab, according to a source close to Malik Khjzar Hayat Khan.' Later on Malik Sahib himself, in a statement dated 19 April 1947, said : "It will be ruinous for all communities to split up the Province into bits. I had, in a Press interview some weeks back, expressed my opposition to any scheme involving partition of the Punjab. I notice now that a section of the Press has doubted the authenticity of that statement. I have in fact on many occasions in the past expressed the view that it would be ruinous for all communities to split up the Province into bits. The Present Punjab boundaries make the province a self-sufficient economic unit. The irrigation system, the electricity scheme, and the extensive development programme of the future, if torn apart, would lead to impoverishing of both the western and the eastern Punjab. It will be a catastrophic calamity if this comes

about and all sections of the Punjabis should consider the dangerous implications, particularly the Hindus and Sikhs in the West and Muslims in the East of Punjab."[2]

Moreover, the Muslim leaders of Punjab and Bengal were for long against Partition and only of late had joined the League Camp. No wonder they would have stood out against Partition if sufficient time had been allowed to make their opposition vocal.

There was one crucial factor. Soon after the June 3rd Plan was announced, the Muslims who were to remain in the Indian Union had begun to realise that they were being sacrificed at the altar of Pakistani Muslims' interests. (Details of this aspect are given in Chapter 26). Most of the aggressive rank and file of the League had been drawn from the Indian Union areas, and in the face of the growing Hindu outbursts, they would have most certainly turned their back on the suicidal course of Pakistan. That could very well have forced Jinnah to revise his stand and come to terms with the Congress. Mosley's expression "before the Muslim League had too much time to think" cannot convey anything other than this.

These were the several factors which, if time had been allowed, would have certainly developed into an effective opposition. And it was to obviate this possibility that Mountbatten jostled the settlement.

Terrific Consequences – Mountbatten's Responsibility

However, the consequences of Mountbatten's decision were terrible. To quote Mosley again : "If the Labour Government was prepared to give united India its freedom by June 1948, how was it possible to promise a divided India freedom ten months earlier?... did he (Mountbatten) really expect to create anything but chaos and the uttermost confusion – even if he could not have envisaged the killing and suffering which would stem from it?

"Mistake after mistake, indeed.

"Partition of India announced in May 1947, and no plans for dividing its Army until June, with only six weeks to go to the deadline.

"Partition announced in May, but the Commission to decide the boundaries along which the two new States would be divided, not appointed until the end of June.

"Partition in May, and Independence in August, but a people desperate to know deliberately kept in ignorance of which country they belonged to until two days after Independence."[3]

Further, Mountbatten's decision to withhold the publication of the Radcliffe Boundary Commission Award till 17 August entailed further disasters. For, in the Award lay the fate of millions of Indians – both Hindus and Muslims. Mosley says: "For the Sikhs and Hindus in Western Punjab and the non-Muslim inhabitants of Lahore it was, of course, vital information. .... This Award would be the signal to them to collect up whatever belongings they had and go East. In the mounting glare of communal tension, the sooner they knew their fate the better."[4]

Allan Campbell-Johnson writes: "Various points of view about publication (of Radcliffe Award) were put forward. On administrative grounds it was argued that earliest possible announcement would be of help to Jenkins (the Punjab Governor) and would enable last-minute troop movements to be made into the affected areas in advance of the transfer of power. Alternatively, it was suggested that in so far as the Award would in any case be bound to touch off trouble, the best date to release it would be 14th August. Mountbatten said that if he could exercise some discretion in the matter he would prefer to postpone its appearance until after the Independence Day celebrations, feeling that the problem of its timing was one of psychology, and that the controversy and grief it was bound to arouse on both sides should not be allowed to mar Independence Day itself."[5]

Leonard Mosley is unsparing in his criticism of Mountbatten on this score as well: "As a man of success, he was, of course, bound to be against anything which would cloud the clear skies of Independence Day. In the light of subsequent events, he was obviously wrong to suppress the report for so many days, and he was obviously even more wrong in failing to take the Indian and Pakistan leaders into his confidence. A prior report would have given millions of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims a chance to pack their bags and leave; a confidential report to Nehru, Jinnah and to the Punjab Boundary Force Commander, General Rees, would have made it possible for dispositions and arrangements to be made to allow them to

leave in some semblance of order. But Mountbatten took no one into his confidence. He hugged the Awards to himself and suppressed them until after Independence Day. Independence Day was happy. But millions of people died or lost everything as a result.

"This is a matter for Mountbatten's conscience. It obviously did not trouble him – or possibly did not even occur to him – for Campbell-Johnson writes of his mood in the last minutes of the British Raj :

'As midnight struck, Mountbatten was sitting quietly at his desk. I have known him in most moods ; tonight there was an air about him of serenity, almost detachment ... For a man sitting on a revelation which would, in the next few weeks, cause the death of nearly a million people and provoke the greatest and most miserable trek in history, it was a remarkable mood to be in'."[6]

In his book published in January 1981, Edward Behr, European editor of *Newsweek International*, has many revelations to make : "As soon as the principle of partition was raised it was obvious that 'communal and religious' stresses would erupt into violence and every army and police unit would be needed to stop mass killings ...

"But Lord Mountbatten refused to defer independence day despite pleas by army commanders from all over the subcontinent. The commanders wanted a delay so that army and police forces could be reorganised as separate Indian and Pakistani entities.

"Lord Mountbatten stuck to the date of August 15, 1947, and apart from posting a force of 5,000 on the new frontier between India and Pakistan – a number which proved totally inadequate – he refused to accept the advice of his subordinate commanders on both sides.

"No one will ever know how many people died as a result of this ill-planned and grotesquely ill-executed division of the Indian subcontinent.

"But surely one of the least wholesome of its aspects has been Mountbatten's post-facto insistence, that he was right, that all deaths that ensued were inevitable, and that no other course of action was possible.

"Many Indian army and police officers, from the highest

ranks to the lowest, know differently and see in Mountbatten, even after all these years, not the glamorous leader of the Burma campaign but a man tranished by *hubris*, with blood on his hands."[7]

Congress Blunders vis-a-vis Boundary Commission

Cyril Radcliffe was the chairman of both the Punjab and Bengal Boundary Commissions. All members of the two Commissions were High Court Justices. Each Commission had two Hindu and two Muslim members. The Bengal Commission was also entrusted with the work of demarcating the Muslim-majority areas in Sylhet district of Assam. The disastrous complacency of the Congress leadership in respect of the constitution of the Boundary Commission has been clearly brought out by Prof. A.N. Bali, reputed educationist and writer of Punjab :

"The Congress leaders had grievously erred in the first place by agreeing to one Boundary Commission for Bengal and the Punjab; secondly, accepting a one-man Commission instead of a three-men Commission; and, thirdly, accepting a particularly obscure person, namely, Sir Cyril Radcliffe, who was neither known for his legal eminence nor for his political impartiality nor for any special contribution to the public life of England. When the name was proposed Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru never made any inquiries about his antecedents. That Mr. Jinnah had readily agreed to the name should have caused some suspicion in the mind of Pt. Nehru. But probably it was too trivial a matter to engage his serious attention. A letter published in a daily paper of Delhi alleged that years ago he had worked as a junior counsel to Mr. Jinnah when he had set up his practice in London. This news was never contradicated. Their fourth blunder was in agreeing to waive the right of appeal against the Arbitrator's award to the British Government."[8]

Baldev Singh, the Sikh spokesman, had pressed for a specific reference in the Government's statement of 3 June to the claims of Sikhs. Mountbatten, however, succeeded in persuading him not to insist on it. Nor did the Congress leaders care to support Baldev Singh. Both of them fell a prey to Mountbatten's pretensions of sympathy to their cause and believed that he would wield his influence with the Boundary Commission to ensure justice to the Sikhs.

Census Figures Fallacious

The basis for the demarcation of boundaries was the 1941 Census figures. Even here, the unrealistic policy which the Congress had adopted previously had now boomeranged. The Congress had issued a call to the people to boycott the Census of 1931 as it entailed 'communal enumeration'. This had resulted in quite a number of Hindus boycotting the Census, implicitly following the Congress dictates. The Muslim leaders, on the other hand, urged the Muslims to enumerate themselves fully. And the same story was repeated in 1941. The Muslim League ministry in Bengal conspired to see that the enumeration among a major section of the Hindu Scheduled Tribes in Bengal forming 15 per cent of the population was not carried out at all. All this had resulted in tilting the balance in favour of Muslims in several districts.

Savarkar had denounced the Congrees policy as suicidal. He had urged the Government to have a close and strict watch over the enumeration of Muslims, lest they should swell their numbers artificially. To the Hindus, he had appealed to put down their community as 'Hindu' alone irrespective of their caste, sect and other denominations.

The Congress which had boycorted the Census, however, had no compunctions in participating in the elections in 1937 and again in 1945-6 and the constitutional set-up based on these very Census figures. While the 1931 Census figures had left their impact on the India Act of 1935, the 1941 Census figures proved to be the crucial factor for deciding the boundaries between Bharat and Pakistan.

Complacency of Hindu Leaders

Radcliffe played his part craftily. Every member of the Commission would, after pleading with him, get away with the feeling that Radcliffe was convinced of the justice of his case. Especially so was the case with the Hindu members. They in turn had made the Hindu masses fondly believe that their claims would be upheld by Radcliffe. M. C. Mahajan, a member of the Punjab Commission, was so firmly convinced about Lahore remaining in Bharat that he did not think of shifting his family from there. The other member Tejsingh too had not thought of shifting even his library from Lahore. The Muslims who formed

just 25% in Lahore too believed the same and had fled *en masse*. The Sikh and non-Sikh Hindus in Central Punjab were consistently fed on the false hopes that the Chenab river would be the demarcation line of East Punjab. And this illusion of theirs persisted up to the last moment of announcement of the Award, i.e., 17 August.

Radcliffe, however, kept his counsel to himself. He had not in fact taken part in any one of the ten sittings of the Punjab Commission. He would only receive and go through the reports. The members' opinions, in his eyes, were merely their proposals. His was the final say, irrespective of the justice of the claims or otherwise of different parties.

The eyes of the Congress and Sikh leaders and the general mass of Hindus – in particular the Sikhs – were opened to the shocking injustices done to them and the terrible fate awaiting them, only on 17 August.

The guideline for division of assets and liabilities of the Government of India had not been specifically mentioned in the June 3rd announcement. But ample indications were there that the basis would be the population of the two dominions. As regards the demarcation of boundary also the Boundary Commission had mentioned population and other factors as the basis. But the 'other factors' had not been precisely spelt out. However, hopes were raised in the hearts of Sikhs by the statement of Alexander Butler, deputy leader of the Conservative Party, in the middle of July 1947 in which he said: "In the partition of the Punjab we have left the Sikh community almost exactly divided between one side of the frontier and the other. It is to be hoped that the Boundary Commission will be able to arrange the boundary so that the shrines and properties and other things held so dear by the Sikhs may be amassed as far as possible within one frontier."[9] Arthur Henderson too had clarified 'other factors' as including the location of Sikh shrines in Punjab.

However, the League was quick to counteract this gesture. *Dawn* threw the challenge that the Boundary Commission's Award would be resisted by the League whatever the consequences, if extraneous factors other than population were taken into consideration. Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan forwarded strongly worded protests to Mountbatten.

Even earlier, Mountbatten, in his conference with leaders on 2 June, had frankly stated the position. He had, in short, conveyed that he had repeatedly asked Sikh leaders whether they desired the partition of Punjab. The Sikhs were so spread out over the Punjab that any partition would necessarily divide their community; nevertheless, they still declared themselves to be in favour of partition. For that purpose different formulae had been examined. But no solution which would safeguard the interests of the Sikhs had been found. It had not been possible to adopt any principle other than division between Muslim-majority and non-Muslim-majority areas.[10]

Again, in his press conference on 4 June, when he was asked whether property would be a factor for consideration of the Boundary Commission, Mountbatten had replied that the British Government – least of all the Labour Government – could hardly be expected to subscribe to a partition based on land property.

The arbitrary style of Radcliffe's approach came to the surface during M. C. Mahajan's discussions with him. The latter had argued on the basis of facts and figures for the retention of Lahore in East Punjab. To this Radcliffe had casually remarked, "How can it be possible to grant both the major cities – Calcutta and Lahore – to only India?" Mahajan's plea to fix up some common criterion and then decide fell on deaf ears.

However, the complacency of Hindu leaders including the Sikhs could not be disturbed, even in the face of such unambiguous declarations. And it was only on 17 August that they were brought face to face with the grim reality of the situation. Most of the great canal systems – the finest in the world, most of the rich wheat lands which the Sikhs and other Hindus owned and most of the Sikh shrines including Nanakana Saheb had been gifted away to Pakistan. So too was Lahore. All the places the Sikhs had hoped to secure had been snatched away from their hands and made over to Muslims. And over 40% of them had been rendered homeless and penniless.

Discrimination and Fraud against Bharat

In short, the Congress and Sikh joint demand that protection of the cultural and religious life of the Sikhs, strategic conditions, economic security and a national distribution of the irrigation systems, river waters, canal colonies, etc., be

made the basis for boundary demarcation had been completely bypassed. In all, just 38 per cent of the area and 45 per cent of the population were assigned to East Punjab. West Punjab was awarded 62 per cent of the area and 55 per cent of the population plus a major share of the income of the undivided province. Of the total 70 million acres of irrigated land in undivided Bharat, the Indian Union got just 48 million acres or 68 per cent, and Pakistan 22 million or 32 per cent. While the loss of property suffered by Hindus (including Sikhs) ran to about 4,000 crores, the loss for Muslims was just a fraction of that.

The same story of fraud was repeated on the Bengal front. The Chittagong Hill-Tracts which had hardly 3% Muslim population was joined to Pakistan. H. N. Pandit, in his recently released book *Fragments of History*, has revealed that Radcliffe was pressurised by Mountbatten to make this concession to Pakistan. The Congress had staked its claim for 59 per cent of the area and 46 per cent of the population of the undivided Bengal. However, under the Award only 36 per cent of the area and 35% of population came to west Bengal. Besides Chittagong Hill-Tracts, Khulna, an overwhelmingly Hindu-majority area, also had been transferred to Pakistan. Further, Darjeeling, a part of West Bengal, had been totally cut off from the rest of the province.

The memorandum submitted be the editor of *Calcutta* contains some more shocking revelations : "The maps supplied to Radcliffe by the Survey Department were fallacious, fanciful. They had no relation to realities. The maps supplied to the Hindu and Muslim members of the Commission differed not only from each other, but from the one given to Radcliffe as well."

The comparative division of territory of both the Eastern and Western parts between Bharat and Pakistan put together boiled down to this : Pakistan with 19% of the total population had got away with 23% of the total territory.

The glaring discrimination shown against Bharat in the case of N.W.F.P. has already been mentioned. The right of self-determination given to the Sind Provincial Assembly was denied to N.W.F.P. And a fresh chance was afforded to the League to seize that province in the form of referendum. Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, reputed all over the country

as Frontier-Gandhi and a great freedom fighter, gave a call to boycott the referendum saying that the option of independent Phaktoonistan was not included therein and the people had been asked to choose only between Bharat and Pakistan. And this left the field entirely free for the Muslim League to whip up the Islamic frenzy of the tribal Muslims with the cry of Dar-ul-Islam on their lips.

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The Holocaust

THE HOLOCAUST overtaking Punjab and Bengal during their cutting up operation defies description. A 50,000-strong border force had been set up to see it through as a 'bloodless operation.' Mountbatten had assured categorically :

"At least on this one question (carnage), I shall give you complete assurance. I shall see to it that there is no bloodshed and riot. I am a soldier, not a civilian. Once partition is accepted in principle, I shall issue orders to see that there are no communal disturbances in the country. If there should be the slightest agitation, I shall adopt the sternest measures to nip the trouble in the bud. I shall not use even the armed police. I will order the Army and Air Force to act and I will use tanks and aeroplanes to suppress anybody who wants to create trouble."[1] However the Viceroy's brave words proved just so much bombast. The genocide of Hindus carried out by Muslims in West Punjab and the repraisals by Hindus in East Punjab have few parallels in the annals of human tragedy.

The Inferno : Complicity of British Commanders

It is strange that our leaders had remained so utterly complacent about the impending cataclysm. It is only when they were actually caught in its deadly coils that they became – alas, too late – aware of its terrifying magnitude. When Nehru flew to Punjab and toured some of the riot-torn areas, the scenes he witnessed there drove him almost to the point of madness. For first time, he was made cruelly aware what Partition had meant to millions of his countrymen in terms of human misery and suffering.

There had been grim portents before the Congress leaders of the looming catastrophe. There was no need to turn to the

pages of history to foresee the fate of *kafirs* thrown into the jaws of Islamic domination. Right before the eyes of the Congress Leaders themselves, blood-curdling outrages had taken place beginning from the Moplah revolt and extending over the entire country. Calcutta and Noakhali were still caught in the frenzy of *jehad*. Rawalpindi in Punjab and several places in N.W.F.P. were even then burning.

Having turned down Jinnah's suggestion for transfer of population, our leaders continued to preach the Hindus in Pakistani areas to stick to their places even when total annihilation stared them in their face. Gandhiji advised the Hindus to face the situation with peace and non-violence and pay the price of life, if need be, to uphold those values. However, the common mass of Hindus, caught in that inferno and unable to live up to those high platitudes of their leaders, began to flee their hearths and homes. The surviving human wrecks, having lost their near and dear ones and all that they could call their own, began a massive trek towards places of safety. Kripalani writes :

"A transfer of population which Gandhiji and other leaders wanted to avoid took place automatically in the case of the Punjab and the Frontier and Sind on account of these fresh riots. This unfortunately we had not anticipated. Hindu refugees from these places poured into India. They were killed, robbed and looted in transit. Muslims from India going to Pakistan were subjected to similar barbarities."[2]

In fact the atmosphere was so inflamed that Nehru and Patel stopped Gandhiji from proceeding to Punjab as they feared that he would get into danger by the frenzied mass of refugees pouring into Bharat.

A word about the role of Sir Claude Auchenleck, the then Commander-in-Chief of Indian Army. J. N. Sahni, the then Editor of *Indian News Chronicle*, says that "he was highly respected as a soldier and C-in-C till he came under the influence of the League. The son of a Muslim ruler from a neighbouring state was one of his influential aides. A Muslim army officer, who later became an important General in Pakistan and led the first raid on Kashmir, was his chief military aide."

Both *Hindustan Times* and *Indian News Chronicle* had exposed the blatantly anti-Indian role of boundary force and of

Auchenleck in particular. One day both Sahni and Devdas Gandhi of *Hindustan Times* were called by Mountbatten. Sahni says: "The Viceroy put on an air of grave resentment as we entered. ... he referred to the reports appearing in my paper and *The Hindustan Times* about the questionable role of the boundary force, the crimes of the Baluchi Regiment, the failure of Auchenleck as Joint Commander, and the sinister atmosphere in the Commander's House. ... Before we could say anything Mountbatten concluded his brief, well-prepared speech by saying, 'And now may I inform you that I have the Prime Minister's and the Deputy Prime Minister's permission to get you placed under arrest, unless I receive satisfactory assurances that this sinister propaganda will stop?' ... We told Mountbatten that ... what we had written was not out of malice, but because we were prompted by a sense of public duty. Both of us put before Mountbatten a volume of authentic evidence to prove to him how much graver and more serious was the truth, and how little of it had been published in the papers."[3]

Delhi in the Grip of Muslim Revolt

The tense situation in Delhi during those days has been described by Kripalani: "Soon after the partition, the atmosphere in Delhi had grown more tense as refugees in thousands poured in from West Punjab. They brought with them gruesome tales of their sufferings in Pakistan – whole villages devastated, women dishonoured, carried away, distributed as "booty," sometimes openly sold. Infants-in-arms and children were speared to death in cold blood. Wives came without their husbands, husbands without their wives and children without their parents. There were innumerable conversions. Arson and loot were rampant. Attacks were made on refugee convoys and refugee trains on the route. Many were killed and many more reached Delhi having been wounded on the way. The Muslims who fled in panic to Pakistan on account of rioting in some parts of Northern India fared no better. As the biggest migration of population recorded in history was in progress, a most dangerous situation arose in the capital. Every fourth person in Delhi was a Hindu or Sikh refugee from Pakistan. They were furious not only against the Muslims who were at the root of partition but also against the Congress for agreeing to it.

"To make matters worse, there were, rumours of a *coup d'etat* on the part of the Muslims to seize the administration of the capital. The fact that the Muslims had collected arms gave credence to the rumours. Searches of Muslim houses by the police had revealed dumps of bombs, arms and ammunition. Sten-guns, Bren-guns, mortars and wireless transmitters were seized and secret miniature factories for the manufacture of the same were uncovered. At a number of places these weapons were actually used by the Muslims in pitched battles. The Sikh and Hindu refugees and many of the non-Muslim residents had no faith in the ability of the Government to afford them protection from any attack from the Muslims. Some even doubted whether the Government would take action against the Muslims. ... Riots broke out in Delhi on September 4, 1947. The Government immediately went into action.

"The task of the Government in quelling the riots was made difficult as the bulk of the police was Muslim. A number of them in their uniform and with arms had deserted. The loyalty of the rest was doubtful. The Government had to bring police and military forces from other provinces."[4]

The appalling insecurity of the Hindus and the Government's utter helplessness to afford them protection was luridly reflected in a statement of Sardar Patel, the then Home Minister, who said that every citizen must become a policeman himself.

Bharata Ratna Dr. Bhagavandas, father of Sriprakasha, has thrown more light on the contemplated *coup d'etat* referred to as more 'rumours' by Kripalani :

"I have been reliably informed that a number of youths of the RSS ... were able to inform Sardar Patel and Nehruji in the very nick of time of the Leagures' intended 'coup' on September 10, 1947. whereby they had planned to assassinate all Members of Government and all Hindu officials and thousands of Hindu citizens on that day and plant the flag of 'Pakistan' on the Red Fort and then seize all Hind.

" .... If these high-spirited and self-sacrificing boys had not given the very timely information to Nehruji and Patelji, there would have been no Government of India today, the whole country would have changed its name into Pakistan, tens of millions of Hindus would have been slaughtered and all the rest converted to Islam or reduced to stark slavery."[5]

Gandhiji's Fast : Its Aftermath

On 12 January 1948, Gandhiji declared his decision to undertake an indefinite fast to persuade the Hindus to call back the fleeing Muslims and ensure peace and safety for them. This step of Gandhiji was clearly a result of an anti-Patel crusade by Azad supported by Nehru. They had, prevailed upon Gandhiji that Patel being the Home Minister was responsible for maintaining peace in Delhi and which he had miserably failed to do. Patel's remonstrations that the Government was doing everything possible to protect the lives and property of Muslims would not satisfy him. When Gandhiji decided to go on a fast, Patel bluntly told him in the presence of Nehru and Azad that there was no justification for such a fast ; the fast would only lead to charges against the Government and particularly against Patel himself, that he (Patel) was responsible for the murder of Muslims. Azad says that Patel, while taking leave of Gandhiji, remarked, "Gandhiji is not prepared to listen to me. He seems determined to blacken the names of the Hindus before the world."

Azad met fasting Gandhiji and jointly they formulated the conditions for ending the fast. The conditions laid down required that : Sikh and non-Sikh Hindus should forthwith stop all attacks against Muslims ; they should ensure that not a single Muslim leaves India because of insecurity ; they should, as an act of atonement, restore and repair the Darga Kutubuddin Bhaktiyar ; they should bring back the Muslims who had left their homes and resettle them; the various Muslim masjids vacated by the deserting Muslims be handed back to Muslims.

A number of Hindu leaders, Sikh and non-Sikh, and a large gathering of Hindus came to Gandhiji pledging to fulfil his stipulation, and the fast was called off.

The above-mentioned last condition, especially, was such as to entail untold hardship and misery to the Hindu refugees who had poured from Pakistan areas. Those were the days of freezing cold. The Hindu refugees had no clothing worth the name, much less woollen garments and rugs. They had huddled themselves under every available roof in Delhi. However, Gandhiji's conditions for ending fast had to be fulfilled at any cost. And quite a number of hapless Hindus – men, women, children and old men who had taken shelter in the deserted

masjids – were dragged out and left in the open air, with the chilling cold and wind and dampness all around.

Apart from the conditions laid down for the termination of Gandhiji's fast, the crucial though undeclared condition related to India's refusal to pay to Pakistan rupees 55 crores from the cash balances under the partition of assets. And it was only after the Central Cabinet had bowed to Gandhiji's wishes and decided to pay the 55 crores that a Peace Committee was formed and other formalities to demonstrate the 'change of heart' between the Hindus and Muslims were gone through and the fast called off.

Gandhiji's fast and his statement were exploited to the full by the Pakistani leaders to further inflame the Muslim masses against the Hindus in their areas. Pakistani papers and wall-posters carried screaming headlines quoting Gandhiji to depict the atrocities on Muslims in Delhi.

The fate of Sikhs and non-Sikh Hindus in the whole of West Pakistan was left entirely to the mercy of the murderous Pakistani *jehad*-mongers. Not a single Congress leader felt it a call of duty to hasten to their rescue at that hour of grave peril.

'Refugees to A Man, Grateful to RSS'

However, there were some who rose to respond to the wailings of their brothers and sisters across the borders. A.N. Bali recounts :

"Non-violence and the advice given by Mrs. Sucheta Kripalani, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Rajendra Prasad, etc., to stay out where they were with a firm trust in God appeared to most of the victims as a counsel of perfection which could only be given from a safe distance. Who else came to the rescue of the people at this stage, but a band of young selfless Hindus, popularly known as the RSS ? They organised in every Mohalla of every town of the province the work of evacuation of the Hindu and Sikh women and children from dangerous pockets to comparatively safe centres. They organised for their feeding, medical aid, clothing and care. Parties for the protection of institutions were organised. Even fire engine brigades were formed in various towns. Arrangements for transport by lorries and uses and provision of escort on the trains carrying the fleeing

Hindus and Sikhs were organised. Day and night vigils in various Hindu and Sikh localities were kept up and people were taught how to defend themselves when attacked. When the situation on the eve of Partition became very serious and law and order utterly broke down – or it would be more correct to say, was now used only to suppress the Hindus and Sikhs,– several members of the RSS showed their proficiency in the use of fire weapons. It almost became a tit for tat. These young men were the first to come to the help of the stricken Hindus and Sikhs and were the last to leave their places for safety in the East Punjab. I could name several Congress leaders of note in the various districts of Punjab who openly solicited the help of the RSS even for their own protection and the protection of their kith and kin. No request for help from any quarter was refused and there are cases which came to our notice where the Muslim women and children were safely escorted out of the Hindu Mohallas and sent to Muslim League refugee centres in Lahore by the RSS men.

"I also found during my tour of the East Punjab a deep sense of gratitude and gratefulness to the Sikhs and the Sanghies among the masses. They were considered the saviours of the people and it was a universal belief that they had made the rehabilitation of a part of the Hindu and Sikh refugees possible in the East Punjab. A few lakhs of them had at least found a temporary shelter in the vacated house and lands. Judging in the light of subsequent history of rehabilitation of refugees, one shudders to think of what would have happened to these refugees if like the other unfortunate refugees they had also to seek shelter in refugee camps and on road-side...

"Their (RSS) discipline, their physical fitness and their selflessness in face of dangers came to the rescue of the people in the Punjab when the whole province was burning and when the Congrees leaders were helplessly fiddling at New Delhi, not being able to overcome the opposition of the Muslim League and the obstinacy of the Governor-General to their proposal for stronger action for the maintenance of law and order. If now somebody from a place outside the Punjab were to call upon the Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab to disown the Sikhs and RSS heroes who defended them gloriously, his advice is sure to fall on absolutely deaf ears."[6]

Finally A. N. Bali says: "The refugees from the West Pakistan – all of them without exception wherever they are living in India, to a man are grateful to RSS for coming to their help at a time when they felt deserted by all."[7]

In those days, the only all-India leader who stood as a light-house of hope and succour to the riot-stricken people in the Punjab was Golwalkar Guruji. His supreme example of fearlessness in the face of dangers, his intense concern for the people, his incessant movements in the riot-torn areas regardless of risk or respite to himself, spurred thousands of RSS workers to plunge into the task of rescuing and offering relief to the uprooted humanity.

To cite an instance: It was September 1947. Golwalkar's ceaseless tour of the Punjab was on. He had started from Jullundur to Ludhiana. Floods had washed a railway bridge on the way. But he would not stop. He proceeded in a railway trolley. After a journey of 10 miles, even the trolley could not proceed further. The bridge had given way, with only the sleepers precariously balancing on the hanging rails. But Golwalkar neither halted nor faltered for even a second. He straightway began nimbly stepping from one sleeper to the other and crossed a distance of over 150 yards. Just below his feet were the surging waters of the river. The accompanying workers followed him. Golwalkar reached Ludhiana in time, to the amazement and boundless joy of one and all.

With such a soul-stirring example before them, no wonder RSS workers felt no pain or risk too great in fulfilling their responsibilities. Indeed, hundreds of them even gladly offered their lives in the act of saving the lives and honour of their brothers and sisters.

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Challenge of States Integration

BY THE 3rd June declaration all the 600 and odd big and small Princely States were to become independent after 15 August 1947. They would be later free etiher to join Bharat or Pakistan or even remain independent.

The mischief of British bureaucrats did not come to a stop with the division of British India. They continued their underhand dealings with the Princes and prodded quite a few of them against joining Bharat.

Credit is due entirely to Sardar Patel and his able aide V.P. Menon, the Secretary of States Department, for effectively undoing the machinations of the British-Muslim Axis and bringing round all the Princely States in the Indian Union area to fall in line with the rest of the country.

Patel's appeal to the Princes issued on 4 July 1947 set the tune for integration of the Princely States with the Indian Union: "This country with its institutions is the proud heritage of the people who inhabit it. It is an accident that some live in the States and some in British India, but all alike partake of its culture and character. We are all knit together by bonds of blood and feeling no less than of self-interest. None can segregate us into segments: no impassable barriers can be set up between us. I invite my friends the rulers of States and their people to the councils of the Constituent Assembly in this spirit of frendliness and co-operation in a joint endeavour, inspired by common allegiance to our motherland for common good of us all. We are at a momentous stage in the history of India. By common endeavour we can raise the country to a new greatness while lack of unity will expose us to fresh calamities. I hope the Indian States will bear in mind that the alternative to co-operation in the general

interest is anarchy and chaos which will overwhelm great and small in a common ruin if we are unable to act together in the minimum of common tasks."[1]

Kashmir Integrates with Indian Union

The major challenge was, of course, in the case of Kashmir. Briefly told, the thrilling sequence is as follows: the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, Maharaja Harisingh, was, after the June 3rd announcement, frankly in a dilemma. The Maharaja, a devout and patriotic Hindu, could not dare to join Paikstan. It would have entailed the destruction of his Hindu subjects, and strengthened Pakistan immeasurably from the strategic point of view as against Bharat. However, in view of the predominant Muslim majority in the state, it was not easy for him to straightway join Bharat either. Ramachandra Kak had once come to Delhi and met Patel. Soon after, Mountbatten arranged Kak's meeting with Jinnah. Mountbatten specially flew to Kashmir in the third week of June in a bid to persuade the Maharaja to join Pakistan.

V. P. Menon says : "Lord Mountbatten spent four days discussing the situation and arguing with the Maharaja. ... He went so far as tell the Maharajah that, if he acceded to Pakistan, India would not take it amiss and he had a firm assurance on this from Sardar Patel himself. Lord Mountbatten went further to say that, in view of the composition of the population, it was particularly important to ascertain the wishes of the people. The Maharaja appeared quite incapable of making up his mind and so Lord Mountbatten asked for a meeting with him and his Prime Minister on the last morning of his visit. At the last moment the Maharaja sent a message to say that he was confined to bed and begged to be excused."[2]

H. N. Pandit, in his *Fragments of History,* has further revealed that after Lord Mountbatten, his ADC Lord Ismay and finally a British resident in Srinagar, William Webb, tried to convince the Maharaja that he had no choice but to join Pakistan.

As a stop-gap arrangement, the Maharaja executed a standstill Agreement with Pakistan and wanted to have a similar link with Bharat. However, the Indian leaders did not consent to that proposal.

The Agreement had given Pakistan a strong foothhold in Kashmir and placed the Postal and Telegraph services under her control. However, there was one stumbling-block. Besides the Maharaja's strong aversion and dread towards joining Pakistan, Sheikh Abdullah, the acknowledged Muslim leader of the state, was openly at loggerheads with Jinnah. Jinnah therefore decided to adopt a policy of coercion and force. Pakistan cut off supply of food, petrol and other essential commodities to Kashmir. Military pressure also was applied in the form of border raids. Mehar Chand Mahajan, the new premier, complained to the British Government about Pakistan's aggressive postures. But there was no response.

In the prevailing conflicting pulls, the Maharaja was in a terrible fix, unable to come to any decision. He had many apprehensions about joining Bharat. Patel, knowing the mind of the Maharaja, pitched upon Golwalkar-Guruji to talk to him. Golwalkar was, as Patel gauged, the right person endowed with the necessary skill and commanding the implicit confidence of both Patel and the Maharaja. Golwalkar flew to Srinagar on 17 October 1947. He brought home to the Maharaja the futility of harbouring any idea of retaining Kashmir as an independent kingdom. Pakistan would never tolerate it. It would engineer internal revolt by Muslims and desertions of the State's Muslim forces. Golwalkar also put the Maharaja at ease about Bharat's capacity to supply all essential commodities. He assured that Patel would look after the interests of all sections of the Kashmir people. Finally, the Maharaja expressed his readiness to sign the Instrument of Accession to Bharat. Golwalkar returned to Delhi on 19 October and reported to Patel about the Maharaja's readiness to accede to Bharat.

However, on 23 October, Kashmir was, all of a sudden, flooded by hordes of Pakistani Tribesmen led by General Akbar Khan of the Pakistan Army. Here also, the British Intelligence Service and senior British diplomatic personnel had actively assisted the Pakistani invaders.

"During the tribal invasion of Kashmir, British Commander of Gilgit Scouts, Major Brown, rebelled against the Kashmir Government and handed Gilgit over to Pakistan, while the Commander of Kashmir Forces, Major H.L. Scott, it is said, deliitely kept his forces scattered in small groups over distant

areas to make joint resistance to the invaders impossible. ... British Commander-in-Chief of India Gen. Bob Lockhart, it is said, kept the Indian Government in dark about the invasion till the end."[3]

All the Muslims in the State battalion stationed at Muzaffarabad deserted; they shot the commanding officer and his adjutant, joined the raiders and acted as advance-guard to the *raiders' column. On* 24 October the raiders captured the Mahura *Power House* which supplied electricity to Srinagar. Srinagar was plunged in darkness. The invaders had announced that they would celebrate their Id on 26 October in Srinagar. The massacre, the rape, loot and burning they indulged in had turned the fair valley into an inferno. A Christian missionary who witnessed their rampage described them as "wild black beasts." Sheikh Abdullah condemand them as "criminals who had dishonoured even the Holy Quran and converted mosques into brothels."

The Maharaja rushed an SOS to Delhi and appealed for help in terms of arms and ammunition and also troops. However, Mountbatten stalled immediate response from India, arguing that precipitate action should not be taken without fuller information. V.P.Menon had therefore to be sent post-haste to Srinagar. Menon returned the next day and urged the supreme necessity of saving Kashmir from the raiders. Again, Mountbatten objected to sending of troops, saying that it was only after accession of Kashmir to India was complete that the step should be taken. He further strongly held that in view of the composition of the population, accession should be conditional on the will of the people being ascertained by a plebiscite after the raiders are driven out of the State. Again, Menon flew to Jammu and got the Instrument of Accession signed by the Maharaja and came back. The decision was taken to accept the accession of Kashmir and to fly the troops immediately. Even after this decision, Mountbatten and the three British Chiefs of Staff of the Indian Army, Navy and Airforce pointed out the risks involved in the operation. But Nehru and Patel stood firm and troops were flown. There was another bottleneck at the Srinagar Aerodrome. The Aerodrome had been snowbound and had become unserviceable. Conditions in Srinagar had become chaotic and even the Maharaja had shifted to Jammu for safety.

However, the RSS Swayamsevaks hastened to the scene and cleared the snow just in time for the Indian planes to land. During the days of repulsion of the raiders by the Indian jawans also the heroic assistance of Swayamsevaks continued. On one occasion, an ammunition chest dropped by the Indian planes for our jawans happend to fall in a spot under the close firing range of the Pakistanis. The Swayamsevaks, braving the enemy shells, managed to sneak there and bring the chest to our jawans.

This was the first occasion for the matching of the courage and military skill of the Indian jawans against the Pakistanis, and they had proved their marked superiority.

On 21 November, Nehru reiterated his promise for the holding of a plebiscite in Kashmir under the auspices of the U.N.O. The U. N. Commission visited Delhi and Karachi in the last week of December 1948 and put forward certain proposals for holding the plebiscite. Pakistan, of course, was only too ready to accept them and before our army had time to throw out the Pakistani invaders completely from the soil of Kashmir, Pandit Nehru offered ceasefire, as a consequence of which one-third of Kashmir has remained in the hands of the Pakistani aggressors to this day.

Giving out his meaningful observations about the Kashmir episode, Menon says : "Ever since the time of Mahmud Ghazni, that is to say, for nearly eight centuries, with but a brief interval during the Moghul epoch, India had been subjected to periodical invasions from the north-west. Mahmud Ghazni had led no less than seventeen of these incursions in person. And within less than ten weeks of the establishment of the new State of Pakistan, its very first act was to let loose a tribal invasion through the north-west, Srinagar today, Delhi tomorrow. A nation that forgets its history or its geography does so at its peril."[4]

The second Princely State to cause a nagging headache for India was Hyderabad. The Nizam of Hyderabad issued a *firman* (11 June) following the June 3rd declaration that Hyderabad would remain an independent sovereign State. Though the population of Hyderabad was over 85 per cent Hindu, the civil services, the police and the army had been monopolised by the Muslims.

Inside Hyderabad the Razakars were on a rampage, with Kasim Razvi, their chief, carrying on a virulent campaign against Bharat in general and Hindus in particular. The sabre-rattling in which he was indulging in his speeches was spreading panic among Hindus and anti-Hindu and anti-Bharat frenzy among the Muslims. On 31 March he called upon the Muslims of Hyderabad not to sheathe their swords until Islamic supremacy had been established. He exhorted them to march forward with Koran in one hand and sword in the other to crush the enemies, and assured them that the 45 million Muslims in the Indian Union would act as their fifth columnists in any such showdown. The Hyderabad State was then boasting of 2 lakh Razakars with small arms, 40,000 regulars and irregulars of the State's forces besides a number of Pathans.

Massacre of Hindus, destruction of temples, rape and abduction of Hindu women went on unchecked, with the Hyderabad Police acting had in glove with the Razakars. Razakars then began indulging in border raids on the neighbouring States of Madras, Bombay and Central Provinces. Attacks on through-trains became frequent. Exodus of Hindus from Hyderabad started.

J.V. Joshi, in his letter of resignation to the Nizam's Executive Council, charged that the law and order situation had completely broken down ; that incidents were not lacking where the police had joined the Razakars in looting, arson, murder and rape and molestation of the womenfolk ; and that, in their despair, many Hindus had sought shelter outside the State. To quote his words : "A complete reign of terror prevailed in Parbhani and Nanded districts. I have seen in Loha a scene of devastation which brought tears to my eyes – Brahmins were killed and their eyes were taken out. Women had been raped, houses had been burnt down in large numbers. My heart wrung in anguish..."

The terrorism inside the State was not merely directed against Congressmen or Hindus ; even Muslims who did not agree with the Razakars received short-shrift. Over ten thousand State Congress members were in jail and the Congress organisation was banned.

"The most disconcerting news was that the Razakars had allied themselves with the Communists. In 1943 the Nizam had

banned the Communist Party throughout the State. This ban was now lifted. Moreover, we came to know that the Communists were being supplied with arms.

"In addition to this, attempts were being made to smuggle arms and ammunition into Hyderabad. An Australian by the name of Sidney Cotton was reported to be engaged in aerial gun-running, with Karachi as his base. The supplies were made by night and Bidar and Warrangal were the receiving airfields."[5]

Concession after concession to Nizam by the Indian Government in the matter of terms of Agreement only whetted his aggressive posture. A section of the British press and some British political leaders fanned his ambitions to remain an independent sovereign. Laik Ali, the Prime Minister of Hyderabad, announced that his State would be seeking the intervention of U.N.O. for resolving the dispute between Hyderabad and Bharat.

Patel's Action Saves Hyderabad

Sardar Patel had on more than one occasion strongly favoured taking of firm action against the Nizam, but every time Mountbatten would urge conciliation and further concession to the Nizam. It was not until Mountbatten left India and was succeeded by C. Rajagopalachari as the Governor-General on 21-6-1948 that strong measures could be contemplated. Interested sections among the advisers of the Union Government had created a bogey of large-scale communal flare-up in the event of action against Hyderabad. They phophesied butchering of Hindus in Hyderabad followed by the slaughter of Muslims in the rest of India. Mass uprisings by Muslims in South India, particularly by the Moplahs, and the intervention of Pakistan were also bandied about.

Finally, to put an end to this farcical drama, Indian forces were ordered to march into Hyderabad on October 13. Even after this order was passed, hectic efforts were made to postpone the hour of action up to 15th.

The plot behind this move for postponement was exposed on the very first day when "the advancing Indian troops captured Lieutenant T. T. Moore, an ex-British Army Commando and Special Services Officer, who had been employed by the Hyderabad Army since August 1947 and who was driving in

a loaded jeep in the direction of Naldurg. was discovered t hat this jeep was full of explosives, while his personal papers showed that he had been given the responsibility for arranging demolitions. He had been sent at top speed by the Hyderabad Army Headquarters to demolish the Naldurg and other bridges. He had been told that the Indian Army advance would take place on 15th September. If the Indian Army had marched in on the 15th and not on the 13th, they would have found all the important bridges blown up. Nature would have added to their difficulties, for with the rains setting in, the heavy army vehicles would have been bogged."[6]

Within hardly four and half days the Hyderabad Army surrendered. The entire 'Operation Polo' lasted for just 108 hours. And Hyderabad was joined to Indian Union like other States.

Bhopal Nawab Tamed

Another ticklish and potentially dangerous move was that of Nawab of Bhopal as the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes working hand in glove with the Political Department headed by Sir Conrad Corfield, an arch imperialist. Soon after the Cabinet Mission Plan was announced, this anti-Indian lobby became active. Efforts were set afoot to cajole Princes, both Hindu and Muslim, to maintain their independence and form a powerful Union for themselves. However, the Maharaja of Bikaner and later on the Maharaja of Patiala opposed this move. They warned that it would amount to playing into the hands of the Muslim League.

At this stage, Jinnah too showed his divisive hand. In the last week of July a Conference of Rulers had been arranged to discuss the accession of their States to Indian Union in respect of certain minimum subjects like Defence, External Affairs and Communications. Jinnah denounced this move of accession as an utterly wrong step and publicly assured that he would guarantee independence of States in Pakistan.

Says Menon: "The Muslim League leaders were by no means idle. Meetings between them and some of the rulers had become almost a daily occurrence. Tempting concessions were being offered to the rulers to inveigle them into joining Pakistan. The League leaders were concentrating in particular on some of the border States.

"As if the intransigence of some of the rulers and the inveigling tactics of the League leaders were not enough, it seemed that the Political Department was adding to our worries. That Department had encouraged the Nawab of Bhopal in his efforts to evolve a 'Third Force' out of the States and reports were being brought to me by some of the rulers that they were being instigated not to accede to India."[7]

Menon protested to Mountbatten against the backseat driving by Conrad saying, "if both Sir Conrad Corfield and myself operated in the same field it would be like trying to walk simultaneously in two opposite directions." As a result, Mountbatten had to ask Conrad to pack off to England.

The Nawab of Bhopal was joined by the Maharaja of Indore who refused to become an organic part of either Dominion. The Nawab wanted treaty relations with both Hindusthan and Pakistan. The Bhopal State Forces were manned predominantly by Muslims drawn from Pakistan. The Police and other services were also overwhelmingly Muslim.

However, with the exit of Conrad and the dissolution of the Political Departmen 1, the firm handling by Sardar Patel ensured the disciplining of all such recalcitrant rulers. By August 15, all States except Hyderabad and Junagadh and two small States under Muslim Rulers in Kathiawar had joined the Indian Union.

Junagadh Bubble Pricked

Junagadh, a State in Kathiawar, Gujarat, was under a Muslim Nawab. On the one side of the State was the sea, and the other two sides were flanked by Hindu states. As such it had no ground-links with Pakistan. However, Jinnah had suceeded in inducing him to accede to Pakistan and also inducting a Leaguer, Shah Nawaz Bhutto, from Karachi as his Dewan.

In the meanwhile, the two other little States, Babariawad and Mangrol, adjoining Junagadh, had acceded to Bharat. The Nawab of Junagadh marched his troops to those areas claiming that they were parts of Junagadh territory. The pro-Pakistan tactics played by Mountbatten in this connection is well exposed by V. P. Menon : "Sardar's view of the matter was that Junagadh's action in sending troops to Babariawad and refusing to withdraw them was no less than an act of aggression which

must be met by a show of strength ... Lord Mountbatten suggested that the question might be referred to the United Nations Organization, but Sardar was opposed to the idea. He contended that there was a grave disadvantage in being the plaintiff in such cases. Both Nehru and Gopalaswami Aiyangar were also opposed to referring the issue to the United Nations Organization; so the suggestion was dropped. ... Lord Mountbatten emphasized the danger of any precipitate action which might lead to war between India and Pakistan. Such a war might be the end of Pakistan altogether, but it would also be the end of India for at least a generation to come. He was anxious that India should not lose her great international position by taking incorrect action. It was finally decided that the military movements to the borders but within Indian territory then being planned should not be delayed."[8]

The Hindu populace of Junagadh and Kathiawar lost no time in sounding a note of revolt. A Provisional Government was formed and the volunteers marched into the State capturing the administration. Later on the Indian Army marched in and normalised the situation. In the plebiscite held later the people voted solidly in favour of remaining in Bharat. Even earlier the Nawab had flown to Pakistan in such post-haste that he did not even wait for one of his Begums and her child to join him! However, he had surely enough taken his dogs and the royal jewellery and the entire cash balances and securities in the treasury to Pakistan safely.

Hindu States Merge in Bharat

Most of the other Hindu States, of course, did not pose much of a problem. The proud and patriotic stance of Maharana Bhupal Singhji of Udaipur during those crucial days set an inspiring example to many other Hindu rulers.

"Udaipur was a link between Jodhpur on the west and Indore and Bhopal on the east, and the dream of Nawab of Bhopal acceding to Pakistan could succeed only if Udaipur came into the proposed Bhopal enclave.

"When the Maharaja of Udaipur received the invitation from the Maharaja of Jodhpur to join the Bhopal plan, this descendant of Rana Pratap replied, 'My choice was made by my ancestors. If they had flattered, they would have left a kingdom

as large as Hyderabad, They did not, neither shall I. I am with India."[9]

However, there were some anxious moments before Jodhpur and Jaisalmer States finally decided to join the Indian Union. Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Bikaner were all major States, whose frontiers were contiguous both with Bharat and Pakistan. V. P. Menon who played the crucial part in the whole episode writes : "The late Maharaja Hanwant Singh of Jodhpur continued to be intractable. Jinnah and the Muslim League leaders had a series of meetings with him. At the last of these interviews, Maharaja Hanwant Singh had taken the then Maharajkumar of Jaisalmer with him, because the Maharaja of Bikaner would not accompany him and he shrank from going alone. Jinnah, I was told, signed a blank sheet of paper and gave it to Maharaja Hanwant Singh along with his own fountain pen, saying 'You can fill in all your conditions.' A discussion followed. The Maharaja was prepared to line up with Pakistan. He then turned to the Maharajkumar of Jaisalmer and asked him whether he would follow suit. The Maharajkumar said he would do so on one condition : If there was any trouble between the Hindus and Muslims, he would not side with the Muslims against the Hindus. This was a bombshell and took Maharaja Hanwant Singh completely by surprise. Sir Mohammad Zafrullah however made light of the whole affair and pressed Maharaja Hanwant Singh to sign the instrument. But the Maharaja now felt unable to take a decision. He i ested to Jinnah that he would go to Jodhpur and return the next day. The Maharaja remained at Jodhpur for three days. The atmosphere in the State was hostile to the idea that Jodhpur should cast its lot with Pakistan; the Jagirdars and nobles were decidedly opposed to it. The Maharaja began to waver. When he returned to Delhi after three days I was informed that, unless I handled the Maharaja quickly, the chances were that he might accede to Pakistan."[10] The further story is briefly told : Menon managed to involve Mountbatten also in his efforts in making the Maharaja see the wisdom of joining Bharat.

Travancore, a Hindu state, also had come under the spell of Conrad, and had declared its intention to remain independent. But the Congress movement which was underground so far, now launched an open agitation against the Maharaja's decision.

The agitators clashed with the police in the streets of Travancore and sparks began to spread. Some one stabbed the Prime Minister, C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, who had advised the Maharaja against the merger, and he had to be hospitalized with serious injuries. The Maharaja wisely recognised the writing on the wall and signed the Instrument of Accession to Bharat. Needless to say, people's agitation was one of the shafts in the armoury of Patel to make the princes see reason.

The raging propaganda of the Muslim League had set aflame the Meo Muslims in Alwar and Bharatpur States and also in Gurgaon area of Punjab into an open rebellion. The Muslims in the state armies and police also revolted and joined the rebels. They attacked the Hindu villages and desecrated temples. However, with the accession of these states to Bharat the rebellion was quelled.

The significance of the successful integration of the States into the Indian Union is indeed historic. The attempts of the British–Muslim Axis to set up so many ulsters in the body-politic of Bharat were totally foiled. The centuries-old poison of disintegration of the country into countless, independent principalities, which was the bane of our national life for so long, was eliminated and a single, unquestioned loyalty to one supreme state authority established.

Undoubtedly, the chief architect of this historic achievement was Sardar Patel. V. P. Menon, worked as the right-hand man of Sardar, says that "in the tasks that lie ahead, India would do well to remember the pregnant words of Sardar that 'it will be folly to ignore realities; facts take their revenge if they are not faced squarely and well'."[11]

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Was Partition Unavoidable?

THE most often repeated justification adduced by the Congress for their acceptance of Partition is that it was unavoidable. But how far does this explanation bear impartial scrutiny?

The British Government had, in their statement of 20 February 1947, for the first time sounded a note of certainty about their quitting of Bharat. They had even fixed a date – not later than June 1948 – for their quitting. The British policy had evidently taken a dramatic turn. The stipulation, till then repeated *ad nauseam*, of their willingness to hand over power only when the Hindus and Muslims would put up an agreed formula had now been given up. They had now affirmed that they would be leaving Bharat irrespective of the conclusion of any agreement between the contending parties.

British Could not Have Imposed Partition

No doubt was now left in the mind of anyone about the genuineness of the British decision. Events beyond the control of Britain had compelled her to take that course. The British, though they had come out victorious in the Second World War, had been reduced thereafter to a second-rate power. Nations like America and Russia had reached the top. The war had taken a heavy toll of Britain's resources. Her loan liabilities with America and Canada were staggering. Her coffers had been nearly emptied, and her armies badly bruised and battered. Truly has it been said that Britain had won the war but had lost her Empire.

The internal conditions in Bharat too afforded no solace to Britain. The upsurge of freedom-fervour sweeping over Bharat in the wake of arrival of Subhas Chandra Bose's Azad Hind Forces at Bharat's eastern borders, the acute resent-

ment generated by the Azad Hind trials, the revolt by the naval ratings and its echoes among the airforce, the police and the people in general – all these had made Bharat a seething volcano.

Signs were not wanting to expose the enfeebled and run-down condition of Britain. To give an instance, the trial of INA prisoners was on. The nation was getting more and more emotionally involved in the trials. The Commander-in-Chife of the Indian Army, Claude Auchinleck, was in a dilemma. He sought the opinion of his junior Indian Commanders ; they in turn unanimously advised him to release the prisoners unconditionally. Accordingly, they were set free. Soldiers who desert the army during a war and join the enemy camp normally would deserve to be summarily tried for treason and shot. But here they had to be released unconditionally. It was nothing less than the acceptance by Britain of its defeat before the rising tide of people's resentment. Thereby Britain's power and prestige in Bharat touched a new low. And with it was removed for ever the fear of the iron hand of the enslaving power.

The most conclusive evidence, of course, came from Stafford Crips who, while replying to a discussion in the House of Commons, frankly admitted that the alternative to quitting would have entailed considerable reinforcement of British troops and civil personnel. "It would be," he said, "politically impracticable, from both a national and an international point of view, and would arouse the most bitter animosity of all parties in India against us.

"Even if we had been prepared to make available the extra troops that would be required to deal with opposition by the Indian people over that period of years, it is certain that the people of this country – short as we are of manpower, as we all know – would not have consented to the prolonged stationing of large bodies of British troops in India."[1]

This statement was candid enough : The loyalty of Indian mercenary army could no longer be taken for granted. And Britain herself was in no position to mobilise extra troops to keep down the mounting Indian opposition.

Cripps defended the Government's decision to withdraw from India on another ground : "When the war came to an end, stability and continued control of India was obviously

threatened ... the circumstances of the situation made it more and more difficult, even if we desired to do so, to continue with the resource and control which has been available to us. ...

"The exigencies of the war situation were such that it was not possible for the British Government to continue with the recruitment of Europeans for the Secretary of State's services, while at the same time there was, of course, great increase in the Indian forces accompained by rapid Indianisation of the officer cadre.

"This meant that side by side with the growing demand for an acceleration of transfer of power on the part of all parties in India, there was obvious and unavoidable weakening of the machinery of British control, that is, control of the Secretary of State's services. It was, of course, through these services that British control had been exercised in the administration of Indian affairs."[2]

With regard to the two vital sinews of internal administration – the Indian Civil Service and the Indian Police – Mountbatten says : " ... supposing Churchill had come back (to power), and given a decision that we were not going to discuss anything for 25 years I don't know if we could have restored that machine that we had. It had run completely down."[3]

Mountbatten, while narrating how he was persuaded to accept his new assignment as the Viceroy, says that the Government leaders "explained how they had reached a murky stalemate ... they don't feel they are gettting anywhere. We can't go on like this. This is going to lead to a disaster – a major disaster, and we think you are the one person who can pull us out of this."[4]

Even Churchill who, while he was the Prime Minister, had rejected the demand for *Swaraj* for Bharat with the caustic comment that he had not become the Prime Minister in order to liquidate the British Empire, had finally agreed to support the Independence Partition Plan.

All these point to but one conclusion : the British had realised that their time was up. They now hit upon a manner of quitting which would protect best their political and economic interests. Their plot to divide Bharat was in line with their previous imperialist game of dividing Ireland and Cyprus.

The budren of the above discussion is simply this : Britain was no longer in a position to impose any of its conditions on

Bharat – though of course they would employ all their wily tactics to push their own schemes down the throats of our national leaders.

Inherent Weaknesses of Pakistan Movement

As to the Muslim League, it was even less in a position to impose its will on the Congress. For, the whole political game of Jinnah was being played on the strength of the abetting British masters. So long as the protective umbrella of the British was there he could go on indulging in more and more of his aggressive gimmicks. The British, by their decision to quit within a stipulated date, had, in fact, broken the back of Jinnah. Thereafter, we find him withdrawing from his declared positions and accepting whatever was being doled out by the British. Finally, he was even content with – nay, he even rejoiced over – the granting of the 'mutilated, truncated and moth-eaten' Pakistan.

Further, the Pakistan movement was beset with a grave weakness. The Muslim response to the separatist call of Muslim League even as late as 1940 was less than 25 per cent. The support of Muslims to the League in the prospective Pakistan provinces was negligible. Whatever support it could muster was mostly from the Muslims in the Hindu provinces. The 1945 elections also did not see the League strong enough to form minstry in any of the prospective Pakistani provinces entierly on its own strength.

Writing in 1946, Husain B. Tyabji had laid bare the illogicality of the Pakistan demand : "But had the Bengal Mahomedans ever asked for it during the last 75 years? No. It is the Muslim League which makes this demand for them, and by its widespread organisation and propaganda is sweeping the Mussaimans into its camp, as the Fascists of Hitler did. And if they succeed for the time, the result may be like that of Nazism of Hitler or Fascism of Mussolini. ... What has been said about Bengal in many ways is applicable to the Punjab. ... As to the N. W. Frontier Province, so far as can now be judged, it is against separation from the rest of India. Thus the whole demand is by outsiders, not the parties concerned."[5]

Ambedkar, in a penetrating analysis, has shown how baseless the League's claim was – that Pakistan was in the best interests of Muslims :

"One finds it extremely difficult to understand how the mere fact that the Muslims are a nation makes political isolation a safe and sound policy. Unfortunately Muslims do not realise what disservice Mr. Jinnah has done to them by this policy. But let Muslims consider what Mr. Jinnah has achieved by making the Muslim League the only organisation for the Mussalmans. It may be that it has helped him to avoid the possibility of having to play the second fiddle. For inside the Muslim camp he can always be sure of the first place for himself. But how does the League hope to save, by this plan of isolation, the Muslims from Hindu Raj ? Will Pakistan obviate the establishment of Hindu Raj in Provinces in which the Mussalmans are in a minority ? Obviously it cannot. This is what would happen in the Muslim-minority provinces if Pakistan came. Take an all-India view. Can Pakistan prevent the establishment of Hindu Raj at the centre over Muslim minorities that will remain in Hindusthan ? It is plain that it cannot. What good is Pakistan then ? Only to prevent Hindu Raj in Provinces in which the Muslims are in a majority and in which there could never be Hindu Raj ? To put it differently, Pakistan is unnecessary to Muslims where they are in a majority because there, there is no fear of Hindu Raj. It is worse than useless to Muslims where they are in a minority, because Pakistan or no Pakistan they will have to face a Hindu Raj. Can politics be more futile than the politics of the Muslim League ? The Muslim League started to help minority Muslims and has ended by espousing the cause of majority Muslims."[6]

However, the Pakistan demand assumed prestige mainly because of the Congress vacillation on that issue and pampering of League. If, on the other hand, the Congress had unequivocally made known its determination to uphold the nation's integrity under all circumstances, the Muslims too would have been compelled to reconsider their stance towards Partition. Already serious misgivings hunted the Muslims in Hindu-majority areas which were going to remain as parts of Bharat. They were beginning to realise the grim truth that they were being made the scapegoats at the altar of the 'Islamic heaven' for the Muslims in Pakistani areas. In the event of Partition, the Muslims here feared that the Hindus were bound to wreak vengeance on them; they would also remain suspect in the eyes

of Hindus for a long time to come. N. V. Gadgil, a member of the first Central Cabinet after Independence, writes :

"June and July 1947 saw the country on fire. Jinnah was attacked by enraged Muslims while on his way to attend a meeting of the League at the Imperial Hotel in Delhi. Muslims who had never known what Pakistan was, got some idea of it from the conflagration that had engulfed the country. The Muslims in Sind, Punjab and North-West Frontier Province were already rulers, they would be free ; similarly the Muslims in East Bengal would be still more powerful, but what would be the lot of the Muslims in the rest of India ? This realisation of the consequences of Pakistan had enraged them greatly. The loudest demand for Pakistan had come from Muslims in the areas which could not go to Pakistan, and these Muslims themselves could not migrate to Pakistan. And if they did, they would lose what they had without any guarantee of any recompense there. The horse of Pakistan, promised by Jinnah, turned out a donkey and his kicks began to be felt."[7]

"The Delhi Muslims used to go to Vallabhbhai Patel and press him to have no truck with the Muslim League. A firm policy towards the League, they said, would sap its power and a majority of Muslims would gravitate towards the Congress, because it would be in power. Some of us had begun efforts in this direction under Vallabhbhai's instructions. Those League Muslims whom we had known since long, pressed us to strike some compromise. Otherwise, they said the British would divide before leaving. They knew well enough that the creation of Pakistan was no solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem. The day of the division of the country might be the day of Id to the Muslims falling within Pakistan; but to those living in the rest of India it would be the occasion of Moharram."[8]

It was precisely this prevalent Muslim mood that Dr. Syed Abdul Latif, a one-time powerful protagonist of Pakistan, reflected in the dramatic reversal of his stand. As days of Partition approached he said : "The creation of Pakistan is bound to result in the break-up of the Muslim community – or which Jinnah calls the Muslim nation – permanently into several pieces." Abdul Sattar Seth was another League leader – a confidant of Jinnah – to cross sides and take an openly anti-Pakistan stand.

Says Khaliquzzaman : "Mr. Jinnah himself realised the grave dangers to Muslims who after the partition were to be left in India. I remember that on 1 August 1947, a few days before his final departure for Karachi, Mr. Jinnah called the Muslim members of the Constituent Assembly of India to his house at 10 Aurangzeb Road to bid farewell to them. Mr. Rizwanullah put some awkward questions concerning the position of Muslims who would be left over in India, their status and their future. I had never before found Mr. Jinnah so disconcerted as on that occasion, probably because he was realising then quite vividly what was immediately in store for the Muslims."[9]

There was another important point of weakness inherent in the Pakistan movement. Its entire leadership was drawn from the aristocratic classes among the Muslims. M. Rafiq Khan, Senior Research Fellow at the Gandhian Institute of Studies, Varanasi, has discussed this aspect in a thoroughgoing fashion :

"The Muslim community in North India acquired a differentiation into two broad divisions from the very beginning of their conversion to Islam in India. A small fragment followed the Muslim invaders from time to time or came during the time of the Muslim rulers for recruitment in the army and other services in India and settled down here, either marrying locally or, in some cases, bringing families from areas in and around Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asia. Since this small minority had come with the invaders or had somehow managed to remain close to the courts, the members of this group developed a supercilious attitude towards the large majority of Muslims who embraced Islam from local communities ...

"This resulted in creating two broad divisions among the Muslims : one which regarded itself as superior and of nobler birth, and traced its descent and genealogy from non-Indian sources, and the other which was usually poor, illiterate, engaged in various occupational pursuits, away from the glamours of the courts and was converted from the local communities. ...

"The rising discontent among the nascent Hindu bourgeoisie pushed the British rulers towards revising their attitude to the Muslim upper classes in favour of adopting a soft policy. This class was only too eager to seize the opportunity and a large section of it again started wallowing in the loaves and

fishes of Government jobs and official patronage ... The prospects of domination by the Hindus in free India adopting a representative form of government developed into a panic and we all know how it culminated in acquiring an ideology of a separate homeland for the Muslims and the creation of Pakistan ... It was this section which, in its own class interest, had tried to mobilise the Muslim masses and formed the hard core of the movement for Pakistan. The members of this class were the foremost pleaders for a separate homeland for the Muslims but, instead of taking of the dangers to their interest and stability, they argued that Islam and the cultural traditions of Indian Muslims would be wiped out in a United India."[10]

Ramgopal who had made an in-depth study of the post-1857 Muslim movement in Bharat says : "Let it not be forgotten that the jealousy and unfriendliness did not extend to the Muslim and Hindu masses, but were restricted to the aristocracy and the middle classes of the two communities whose living depended on Government jobs and Government favours."[11]

The League's limited appeal and influence among the Muslims stemmed from these crucial weaknesses.

For all his bluster and bombast Jinnah himself was not, till the very last, very sure in his mind about the goal of Pakistan. Up till 1940 he had not uttered a word about it. In an article in *Time and Tide* on 9 March 1940, i.e., just a few days before the Pakistan resolution, he had made no mention of his idea of an Independent Muslim State. He had, instead, suggested : "A constitution must he evolved which recognises that there are in India two nations, who must both share governance of their common motherland." The fact that he was overjoyed when finally the June 3rd Plan was accepted by the Congress, is also enough indication that it must have come as an unexpected windfall and that he had in his heart of hearts never expected that his bluff would pay him off so well. In fact he told his A.D.C. the day he arrived in Karachi : "I never thought it would happen. I never expected to see Pakistan in my lifetime."[12]

The conclusion is inescapable that neither the British nor the League leaders were in a position to impose their will on the Congress. The Congress was eminently in a position to assert

and carry to success its decision if only it had chosen to stick to its goal of United Bharat.

M. C. Chagla, in his address to the open session of the Bharatiya Janata Party on 29 December 1980, too had affirmed: "I have always felt that the creation of Pakistan was a crime and a folly, and could have been avoided if we had shown some sagacity. Unfortunately, Pakistan is there and our country, our Bharat, has been divided when it should not have been divided. Look at the map of the world, look at the map of the Peninsula of India, and we can see that the gods in their wisdom wanted this country to be one, wanted us to have one culture and spread it to the whole world."[13]

Partition Plus Genocide

The second argument advanced by the Congress leaders for acceptance of Partition was this : The country was then faced with but two alternatives : partition or civil war ; the Congress chose the former in order to prevent the latter. But on closer scrutiny, even this reasoning will appear to be baseless. The argument starts with the presumption that time-honoured principles could be sacrificed for the sake of expediency. It ignores the basic truth that nations are built round steadfast loyalty to certain principles and never on make-shift arrangements fashioned to avoid situations – however vexed they may be. While devotion to high national ideals inspires the people to heights of self-sacrifice, compromises in that regard will only dissipate that spirit. The test of nation's leadership lies precisely in this – their will and ability to resist the temptation of compromise in trying situations and hold on to their cherished goals.

This argument also falls flat in view of the subsequent events. By no stretch of imagination could anyone have expected Pakistan to display a generous and brotherly attitude towards the Hindu minority in her areas. The crescendo of *jehad* with its attendant horrors was bound to reach a climax with the establishment of their own rule and the army and police under their command.

In fact, Rajendra Prasad had clearly envisaged the catastrophic consequences of Partition while he was in prison during the 1942 agitation :

"There can be no doubt that Partition is a solution of despair. It cannot solve the problem of minorities. My apprehension is that it will aggravate it. It is bound to leave behind a bitter legacy. Its enforcement is bound to be followed by ebullient, joyous exuberance on one side and sullen, smouldering resentment on the other. It is of such stuff that fratricidal feuds and world-wide wars are made. We shall be wise not to underestimate them.

"But – and there is a but which cannot be ignored – if all this has no appeal and Partition there must be, we should be prepared for the aftermath and not hug the delusion that thereafter all will be plain sailing. It is at least as easy to visualize the disastrous consequences as it has been to paint the pleasant picture of it."[14]

Acceptance of the June 3rd Plan, therefore, was clearly equlvalent to Partition plus an unparalleled genocide and uprooting of crores of human beings on both the sides. In fact, the carnage which overtook the country in the wake of Partition left the leadership so shocked and disillusioned that, as Pyarelal says, "Two years later, on 16 October 1949, Pandit Nehru declared before an audience in New York that if they had known the terrible consequence of Partition in the shape of killings etc., they would have resisted the division of India". "If only we had known !" exclaimed Dr. Rajendra Prasad. As for Acharya Kripalani, his choicest epithets in later years were reserved for those in the Congress High Command on whom he put the entire responsibility for Partition-so far had his own mind travelled from the position he took up (of defending the June 3rd Plan) in that fateful session of the AICC meeting in June 1947."[15]

There are indeed very solid grounds for believing that had our leadership stood firmly against Partition, things would have definitely taken a different turn. Unity of Bharat could have been upheld and internal strife too obviated. Britain's new stance had, as we have just seen, put Jinnah in a tight corner. His own ranks, which had flocked round him in an outburst of religious zeal, were getting into a disarray in the face of the hard realities. Desertions from his camp had started. All its inherent weaknesses and inner contradictions had begun to erupt. Jinnah was only too well aware of the predicament in which he was placed when Mountbatten told him that if he did not accept whatever had

been offered, he would lose even that for ever. This was a bare statement of fact which Jinnah also knew quite well.

On the other hand, the Congress was placed in a position of unassailable strength. If only the Congress had seized that golden opportunity to rouse the nation to accept the challenge – whether of the British or the Muslims or both – to the nation's integrity, the nation would have most certainly responded to it to the last man. The Army and Police too were in a ferment. And, as the British Government themselves had expressed, they could no longer be relied upon to put down the national resistance.

Further, all over the country, the Hindus were rapidly organising themselves into a formidable patriotic force. Thousands of Hindu youths had become imbued with a spirit of heroism, discipline and sacrifice at the nation's altar. This indomitable Hindu force was ready to stake everything and stand by our national leadership in case they had resolved to resist Partition at all cost. The RSS chief Golwalkar Guruij's whirlwind tour of the country during those days was proving a great source of morale-booster to the people. In his stirring speeches, he was invoking the inspiring vision of the integrated picture of Bharat Mata and calling upon the people to consider no sacrifice too great in the cause of safeguarding the unity of the motherland. However, when Golwalkar heard on the radio that the national leaders had finally accepted Partition, he exclaimed in anguish: "If only our leaders had tarried for just six more months, Jinnah would have come to terms with Nehru ready to give up his demand for Pakistan." Left without the sheet-anchor of the British and faced with the prospects of direct confrontation with the organised might of the patriotically inspired nationalist forces, Jinnah would surely have foreseen his fate in case he was to rely on the threat of force.

In such a situation, the fears of large-scale bloodshed were entirely unfounded. Even if there had been some violence, it would have been nothing in comparison with what actually took place.

In fine, the acceptance of June 3rd Plan got us Partition plus genocide, whereas a firm stand against the Plan would have got us United Bharat and minimum bloodshed. The Congress leadership, however, failed to accept the challenge and instead opted for Partition.

How strange and how sad indeed!

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The Poisonous Seeds

THE RESOLUTION of AICC on 15 June accepting the Partition was prefaced with the following note of optimism:

"Geography and the mountains and the seas fashioned India as she is, and no human agency can change that shape or come in the way of her final destiny. Economic circumstances and the insistent demands of international affairs make the unity of India still more necessary. The picture of India we have learnt to cherish will remain in our minds and our hearts. The AICC earnestly trusts that when the present passions have subsided, India's problems will be viewed in their proper perspective and the false doctrine of two nations in India will be discredited and discarded by all."

Even later, Congress leaders were wont to express similar sentiments. Their frequent refrain was "we divide today to unite tomorrow."

One wonders what had prompted our leaders to continue to harp on this note of hope and confidence. Could it be a sense of guilt pricking their conscience that they had betrayed the people's trust in them? Or was it an attempt to soothen the people's enraged feelings by depicting the 'temporary division' as but a small price compared to the freedom achieved – and thereby lessening the enormity of their actions? Whatever their afterthoughts, the question remains why the Congress leadership was reduced to that tortuous, guilty state of mind. What were the factors which led the towering stalwarts of the freedom struggle who had vowed before the people to safeguard the country's unity to eat the humble pie? Such an analysis is all the more relevant when we remember that these very leaders were soon to act as the helmsmen of independent Bharat.

The mental condition of our leaders of that period resolves

itself into four facets : firstly, lack of firm ideological conviction ; secondly, falling prey to the Britishers' divisive machinations ; thirdly, undermining the will and self-confidence of Hindus ; fourthly, succumbing to exhaustion, loss of nerve and, in the case of many of them, to temptation of power.

First and foremost of these is the lack of ideological faith. Their very concept of our nationhood was emotionless, devoid of the life-spirit – being limited to the territorial, political and economic factors. Even in the resolution quoted above, Congress recognised only geographical, economic and international circumstances as the sole basis for the integral existence of Bharat. But Bharat has had a unique national life vibrant with a long and glorious historical, cultural and spiritual heritage. Our motherland is to us much more than mere mountains and rivers that make up her geographical profile ; she is the inspiring Motherely Form, Divinity Incarnate, whose glories Bankimchandra, Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo and such other savants had sung. This underlying cultural life-spring unifying Bharat has been beautifully described by the renowned British historian Vincent Smith in these words : "India beyond all doubts possesses a deep underlying fundamental unity, far more profound than that produced either by geographical isolation or political suzeranity. That unity transcends the innumerable diversities of blood, colour, language, dress, manners and sects." He also says : "The most essential fundamental Indian unity rests upon the fact that the diverse people of India have developed a peculiar type of culture and civilisation utterly different from any type in the world."

Lack of National Conviction

This basic faith was given a go-by in Congress thinking. The unity of Bharat became in its eyes merely a matter of mundane political bargaining. Apportionment of political power became the only issue for the endless parleys that the Congress leaders carried on with the British on the one hand and the Muslim League on the other. Almost everyone at that time seemed to equate achievement of Independence with division of powers. The question "Why Swaraj ?" had been shelved to the background. The sublime national ideals and aspirations forming the life-breath of Independence had all but evaporated. The vision

that had inspired countless martyrs of the freedom struggle had become eclipsed. Independence had come to mean, at best, wielding of political and economic powers without the foreigner's interference. We have already observed how Nehru, while criticising the Cripps proposals, had spelt out the content of Independence precisely in these terms.

There are some who try to justify Partition saying, "Hindus and Muslims are like brothers in a family. If for any reason the brothers cannot get on together, is it not customary for them to divide the property between themselves and live separately ? Why not view Partition also in the same light ?" This logic too is just another garb for looking upon Bharat as mere material property amenable to division. Not for them is it the sacred Motherland or the adored Bharat Mata. But has anyone heard of children cutting their own mother into two, claiming that she too is their ancestral property ? It is only in an ideological void that these and like lifeless arguments take birth.

One can successfully face and come through critical situations in life, only when one's whole being is surcharged with fervour and faith in certain ideals. What happened in the case of our leaders was the exact opposite : their basic faith itself had withered away.

One often wonders whether even the basic conviction about the single homogeneous nationhood of Bharat had at all struck roots in the minds of our leaders. Deep in their minds they appear to have been haunted by a nagging feeling that Muslims were after all of an organically different psyche who had never identified themselves with the mainstream of our life here.

Rajendra Prasad has taken great pains to collect and correlate all such aspects that present both Hindus and Muslims as a single social inter-mixture. But the arguments he has advanced to counteract those propounded by Muslim League in its Pakistan Resolution, betray the ideological wavering mentioned above.

Rajendra Prasad argues :

"The object of Partition is to have separate Muslim and Hindu states – just as national states were created after the First Wor d War in Europe – so that both Muslims and Hindus may have an opportunity in their respective states to develop their

cultural, spiritual, economic and political life in accordance with their own genius and shape their own future destiny. There is no need to quarrel with this object, if it can be attained. However, the Hindu and Muslim populations are so spread and intermingled with each other that it is impossible to have a homogeneous state of either the Hindus or the Muslims in any part of the country without a considerable minority of the other community in it."[1]

"... Instead, therefore, of seeking a solution of the Indian problem in the creation of national states of Hindus and Musalmans, in each of which there will remain a considerable minority of the other community, is it not better to allow India to continue as an un-national state that it is and has been? The desire expressed by the League to have separate national states of Musalmans is not even 6 years old, and, as we shall see, cuts across the history of more than as many hundred years. The object therefore should be not the creation of national states but the strengthening of the un-national states in India, removing from it all those aspects and features which detract from its un-national character... I cannot better than conclude the discussion with a quotation from Lord Acton... those states are substantially the most perfect which ... include various distinct nationalities without oppressing them."[2]

It would hardly be possible to counter the logic of Partition by Rajendra Prasad's implied premise that there is no single nationality in Bharat and that it is an intermingling of Hindu and Muslim nationalities. For, granting the Muslims an unfettered opportunity to shape their own "national" future in accordance with their "nationalist" aspirations was equivalent to leaving the decision in their own hands. If they felt that their interests were best served by an independent nation-state we could no longer claim any moral right to say 'no' to it. The principle of self-determination had also been officially accepted by the Congress more than once, finally affirming the same in its resolution of 1945. Only, it had not *de jure* accepted the League's claim of a separate Muslim nationhood, though it had done so *de facto*.

The conviction of a single indivisible nationhood was patently the *sine qua non* for taking an uncompromising stand against Partition. And the initial capitulation on this basic

ideological front triggered off the entire future drifting of Congress.

Path of National Assimilation Ignored

Secondly : Our leaders fell an easy prey to the ruse of British who kept playing the tune that they would relinquish power only when Hindus and Muslims came together and put forth an agreed formula. Our leaders' refrain 'No Swaraj without Hindu-Muslim unity' was, if at all, a more forceful version of the same tune ! They had thus conforred the power of veto on the Muslims in respect of the freedom struggle which proved to be their undoing on the strategic front. It is not that our leaders were unaware of the divisive tactics of the British or of the fact that appeasement of Muslims would whet their separatist appetite further. (See Appendices I, II and III.) But they could not overcome the temptation of chasing the mirage of 'Hindu-Muslim Unity.' They were, doubtless, motivated with the noblest of intentions and the purest of patriotic inspiration, but the policy they pursued proved to be unrealistic and therefore disastrous.

Whenever aliens settle down in a country after coming there either as refugees or as invaders, they will have to gradually become one with the main current of the national life there if the country has to remain unified, strong and secure. Only then will the new settlers also enjoy peace and prosperity. It becomes therefore the primary and paramount duty of the native people of any country to absorb the new settlers in their mainstream. It was this basic rule of life that was sadly ignored by us. It would be useful to analyse our failure in this regard in some detail.

Muslims were by no means the first to invade Hindusthan. Kushans, Shakas, Huns and others had preceded them by over a thousand years. However, as we have already seen, they were all not only vanquished on the battle-field, but were culturally assimilated in the sublime and powerful life-current flowing here. But the case of Muslims was different from that of those earlier invaders. Even after the Muslim power was broken up, crores of Muslims stayed here. But except for a handful none of them were the descendants of alien invaders ; they were a peculiar new community, being the progeny of Hindus who had been converted

to Islam, many times by fraud, temptation or force. Physically they were children of Hindusthan, but mentally aligned with foreign invaders. Notions such as they had come here as conquerors from Iran or Arabia and that they had ruled over Hindusthan for a long time, were still lingering in ther consciousness.

It was therefore of supreme moment to see that the Muslim mind became firmly rooted in the national soil here. As long as they were mentally wandering in the desert sands of Arabia they could not be expected to avoid friction with the Hindus. It was essential that they had to be cautioned at every step and an atmosphere created so as to attune them to the new dispensation. The Muslims needed to be told in soft yet clear terms :

"Well, you too are children of this motherland just like us, the Hindus. Both of us belong to the same ancestral stock. By race and by blood, we are brothers. Only your religious forbears happened to be converted to Islam by invaders like Moghuls, Turks, Afghans etc. That sheer accident of history need not make you align yourself with and behave as those past aggressors. Hereafter your and our lot are cast together. Your interest is not separate form that of the enitire nation. Demanding special rights and cherishing separatist ambitions in one's own motherland ill behoves her children. Now, in view of the common enemy enslaving both of us, the time has come for you to eschew whatever past separatist memories might be haunting your mind and turn a fresh leaf in your life. Open out your hearts to the noble examples of the great nation-builders and freedom fighters of this country and join us in the present struggle for freedom. Also try to appreciate the sublime cultural values of this land such as reverence for woman, the cow and the motherland. A high-water mark of our liberal spiritual tradition has been respect towards other religious faiths. Adoration of the land of our birth as a mother is mannifest in the inspired invocations like *Vande Mataram* and *Bharat Mata-ki-Jai.* Let all these sentiments touch the inmost chord of your heart. Try to understand, appreciate and assimilate all these national features and become identified with the mainstream of our national life here."

True, there would have occasionally arisen moments of friction while trying to inculcate these values in the Muslims.

Whatever their inhibitions, the inevitability of their conforming to the national norms should have been brought home to them. The instance of Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar shows how this could have been done. Savarkar, even while seeking the co-operation of the Muslims in the freedom struggle, had declared : "If you come, with you ; if you do not, without you ; and if you oppose, in spite of you – the Hindus will continue to fight for their National Freedom as best as they can."

In fact this was the welcome, though undeclared, stand of the Congress, implicit in its resolution while launching the famous 1942 Quit India movement. But that was an exception. The recurring note of Congress thinking all through ran diametrically opposite to this. Their policies, in place of persuading the Muslims to get into the national moorings, only helped to sharpen their separatist and aggressive tendencies. With the result, they utterly failed to make the Muslims merge themselves in the national mainstream of Hindusthan. Gandhiji admitted that his life-dream of Hindu-Muslim unity had been razed to dust. He had no desire to be present in Delhi on the day of 'advent of Independence'. He was away in Calcutta, drenched in the blood and tears of the uprooted millions. He would not touch food or water the whole day. It was probably the most trying day for him, his heart wrung out as never before in his life.

The Split Muslim Psyche

How exactly did the Congress policy of appeasement affect the Muslim mind ? This crucial aspect needs to be elaborated further.

Jinnah, who had not cared to look at the idea of an independent Muslim State in 1931, himself came round to pass the Pakistan Resolution in 1940 : and it took only seven more years for him to realise the dream. However, not all the Muslims in Bharat had any illusions that the formation of Pakistan would usher in a paradise for them. Despite this, all of them voted solidly for the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan at the time of the 1945 elections. Whence this paradox ?

There are in the Muslim mass mind some catchy phrases which never fail to set their minds aflame, such as "Islam in danger", "*jehad*", "Convert the *Dar-ul-Harb* into *Dar-ul-Islam*".

As F. K. Khan Durrani writes in the preface to his book *The Meaning of Pakistan:* "There is not an inch of the soil of India which our forefathers did not once purchase with their blood. We cannot be false to the blood of our fathers. India, the whole of it, is therefore our heritage and it must be reconquered for Islam. Expansion in the spiritual sense is an inherent necessity of our faith and implies no hatred or enmity towards the Hindus. Rather the reverse. Our ultimate ideal should be the unification of India, spiritually as well as politically, under the banner of Islam. The final political salvation of India is not otherwise possible."[3]

An identical interpretation for the creation of Pakistan has been given by one of the greatest historians of this century, Arnold Toynbee: In one of the articles titled 'What is Pakistan?' he writes that it "was the first successful step in this twentieth century to realise their (Muslims') 1200-year old dream of complete subjugation of this country."[4] Toynbee has only highlighted the pan-Islamic spark imbedded in the Muslim psyche – since its very inception.

However, there was present also another train of thought among the Muslims here. An overwhelming majority of them were of Hindu origin. Despite conversion to Islam, they have for centuries mingled and lived in harmony with Hindus, in countless cities and villages. Their food, deportment and social manners are mostly indistinuishable from those of the Hindus. The Muslim here is akin to the Hindu and has no resemblance whatsoever to the Musilm in Turkey, Iran or any Arab country. In fact, the Muslims of those countries customarily refer to Muslims from Bharat as 'Hindus' only. What then is the factor which separates the local Muslims from Hindus? It is their latent religious fanaticism. It was, therefore, of crucial importance not to set their fanaticism aflame. But the Congress by going all out in the Khilafat movement only helped to rouse their religious frenzy. The Congress conferred leadership of Muslim community on individuals known for their unabashed fanaticism.

Confusing 'Means' for 'Ends'

It was understandable that some gesture be shown to the Muslims to wean them away from the British camp. To keep one of the two adversaries on one's side in that triangular tussle was

indeed a necessary strategy. However, it was to be only a *strategy*, not the *goal*. The Congress leadership slipped in realising this crucial distinction. What was to be a short-term strategy became the 'aim', in fact, a 'principle'. The solgan 'No Swaraj without Hindu-Muslim Unity' was evidence of this total reversal of the 'means' and the 'end', the 'strategy' and the 'goal'. And for achieving 'unity' Muslim appeasement became the chief fulcrum round which the Congress policy began to revolve. Having been caught in that enchanted circle, the Congress began throwing to the winds, one after another, the basic tenets of national unity and national values till, finally, it lost sight of its basic goal itself. Instead of drawing the Muslims into the national current, the Congress itself was dragged by the pull of Muslim separatism.

The utter hollowness of the solgan 'No Swaraj without Hindu-Muslim unity' became evident from one more glaring fact. The British left our country and handed over 'Swaraj' to us at a time when 'Hindu-Muslim Unity' was completely ruptured and even the age-old normal social intercourse between the Hindus and Muslims was totally shattered. In fact, it was only after according a constitutional burial to that solgan by way of Partition that 'Swaraj' was secured. Indeed, how illusory must have been the convictions and policies of our national leadership !

Hindu Backbone Broken Up

The third factor which led to the collapse of the Congress leadership was their disastrous policy vis-a-vis Hindus which broke up their will and morale. It was the direct and tragic consequence of their going after the chimera of 'Hindu-Muslim Unity' at any cost. And what was the 'cost' ? The word 'Hindu' was dubbed as communal; all historical memories of his glorious past were dumped into a dark corner; since the national flag Bhagava had been 'tainted' by Hindu glory, it was to be shunned; since *Vande mataram* tended to stir the Hindu heart to its depths, that song was to be mutilated; the same with Hindi, the national language. Similar was the case whenever riots broke out. On the one hand the Muslims had declared *jehad* and were indulging in barbaric atrocities, with Government too abetting them. On the other side were the Hindus, to whom the leaders kept on preaching non-violence, and con-

demning them for raising their arm even in self-defence. Thus, at every step the Hindu who was, in fact, the backbone of the freedom struggle got worsted – beaten both by the Muslims and their own leaders.

Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, one of the greatest of modern Indian novelists, had put succinctly the role expected of Hindus in the freedom struggle : "Hindusthan is the land of the Hindus. It is, therefore, the duty of the Hindus alone to liberate her from the shackles of foreign domination. Moslems are sitting here with their face turned towards Arabia and Turky. Their heart is not in the land of Hindusthan. But when it is not here, it is no use lamenting over it. ... We need not get unnerved by counting the heads of Moslems. Numbers are not the supreme truth in this world ... In freedom's battle in any country, do all the people of that country take part ?... When the Americans fought for their freedom, more than half the people of that country were with the British. In the Irish freedom struggle, how many of them were actually engaged in it ? ... Right or wrong is not decided by the counting of heads. It is decided by the intensity of the *tapasya* or the single-minded devotion to the cause." He concluded : "The problem before the Hindus is not to devise ways and means to bring about an artificial unity. The problem before them is how to organise themselves."[5]

Further, is not the very cry "No Swaraj without Hindu-Muslim Unity" an insult to the freedom-loving Hindu ? Could there have been anything more emasculating to the Hindu – the Hindu who had successfully withstood and smashed the onslaughts of many invaders over the past thousands of years – than telling him that he could not secure Swaraj without the help of Muslims ?

In fact the most urgent task that needed to be carried out, even while trying to earn the goodwill of the Muslims, was to set aflame in the hearts of Hindus a spirit of passionate love of motherland and intese pride in their cultural greatness coupled with virtues like manliness, heroism and strength to face the challenge of both the British and the Muslims if need be. Having failed to recognise this basic source of national strength, the Congress in its wild-goose chase of Muslim support entirely ignored and even delivered mortal blows to it. As a result, when the Muslim League at the final stage confronted the Congress

with violence and bloodshed, they felt powerless to face it, and surrendered to the demand of Pakistan.

Doubtless Gandhiji had excelled in educating the popular mind and rousing the popular sentiments in the cause of Independence. His call for resistance to foreign rule and sacrifice in the nation's cause evoked tremendous response from the people He also succeeded in the second and third stages of the struggle, i.e., agitation and mobilisation. However, all that enthusiasm lasted for just a few weeks or months. The people's feelings stopped and exhausted themselves at the stage of agitations. The next crucial phase of transforming the people's feelings and energies into a disciplined and dedicated organisation inspired with the right kind of national ideals was not accomplished. It was this serious lapse which lay at the bottom of the rapid petering out of the agitations and the resulting oppressive frustration. The dismal failure of the 1942 movement was directly due to this grave handicap. Gandhiji had taken it as is his final plunge to force the British out and had failed.

A great national struggle can succeed only if the leadership is animated with the right type of national convictions and has succeeded in building up an unassailable organisation of selfless men – strong-willed, disiplined and inspired with the same ideals. The Congress had grievously failed on both these counts.

Leadership Exhausted and Tempted

Lastly, there was one more factor which in the final stages hastened Partition : the effete and exhausted condition of the national leadership just prior to the exit of the British.

The following trenchant words of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia make poignant reading : "No shadow of doubt need obscure the simple proposition that a decaying leadership operating in a riotous situation produced partition, and that a purposive and more youthful people may have avoided the division of Hindusthan into India and Pakistan."[6] Lohia has also recorded his deep regret at his own non-involvement at that crucial stage : "It is a matter of great sorrow to me today that not one man died or sat in jail, when this great land of ours was partitioned. I regret greatly that I did nothing to get into the jail at India's partition. The dread but false prospect of Hindu-Muslim rioting had so blinded me as to render me incapable of bearing witness

to my faith at the most decisive moment of my life and the country's recent history. So were others blinded. But something worse happended to the leadership : It was tempted."[7]

Pandit Nehru, too, in his speech at the crucial AICC meeting on June 15, 1947, had confessed to the real state of their mind. Says Pyarelal : "Pandit Nehru's speech revealed – what had all along been suspected – that it was the Interim Government's helplessness, owing to sabotage from within by the League members in the Government and retention of control by the British, to cope with the spreading anarchy that had driven the Congress High Command to desperation, so that they were glad to escape from the intolerable situation they found themselves in, even by paying the price of partition. The Congress leaders were past the prime of their lives. After a quarter of a century of wandering in the wilderness they had come within sight of the Promised Land. They were doughty warriors and were not afraid, if necessary, to take the plunge once more. But they were afraid that it might not be given them to see another successful fight through, and the fruit of their struggle and the countless sacrifices of a whole generation of fighters for freedom might slip through their fingers when it seemed almost within their grasp. If the hour of decision had come earlier when the Congress was in the wilderness, when they were young and before their experience in the Interim Government and the exercise of power had coloured their thinking and outlook, their choice might have been different."[8]

Again in 1960, speaking to Leonard Mosley, Nehru frankly confessed : "The truth is that we were tired men, and we were getting on in years too. Few of us could stand the prospect of going to prison again, and if we had stood out for a United India as we wished it, prison obviously awaited us. We saw the fires burning in the Punjab and heard every day of the killings. The plan for partition offered a way out and we took it."[9]

We may also recall what Pandit Nehru said to his trusted historian Michael Breacher :

"Well, I suppose it was the compulsion of events and the feeling that we couldn't get out of that deadlock or morass by pursuing the way we had done ; it became worse and worse ...We saw no other way of getting our freedom ... in the near future, I mean. ... And so we accepted it."[10]

This has been stated in even clearer terms by N.V. Gadgil, who was a member of the first Cabinet of Free India : "The main political force in the country was the Indian National Congress, and its leaders were tired old men. They were not quite sure of the gains of four decades of incessant struggle, nor were they confident of what the future had in store for them. They were afraid to stretch too much lest it should break and all be lost. The result was that even the old and valiant fighters were inclined to compromise rather than stake their all."[11]

This was the reason why the Congress leaders could not respond to the heroic call of Purushottamdas Tandon at the AICC. The lust for political power, which had been growing on the Congress for some years, had worked to snuff out the fighting spirit in most of them. Gadgil describes the Congress leaders' unseemly race for power immediately after the 3 June Plan was announced : "The moment the 3 June Plan was out, public kites began to fly in Delhi in newspapers and gossip corners prophesying who would and would not be in the first Cabinet of Independent India. The daily visitors to Gandhiji became the yardstick to measure the shape of the future Cabinet and dozens of 'engineers' who used this yardstick flourished in Delhi at the time. This was the main topic of discussion in the Congress lobbies, and quite a few Congressmen were busy mobilising their forces to brighten their prospects. Many members, who had grown old in Congress politics, had made Delhi their headquarters, continued to make daily pilgrimages to the doors of Gandhiji, Patel, Nehru and occasionally the Maulana."[12]

Krishna Menon, who was so close to Pandit Nehru, too had given a similar opinion. "The Congressmen so much coveted power and position that they had no heart to continue the fight to preserve the unity of the nation."[13]

In this power-hungry state of Congressman it was futile to expect them to face the travails of imprisonment once again.

Lohia makes a critical analysis of the Congress mind in those days : "In a situation where Hindu-Muslim relationships had become nearly impossible, old Congressmen's greed for office appeared on the surface in the garb of some high purpose. Some of them may not themselves have been aware of their low motivation. They could in fact feel the glow of righteousness,

for when they were dismembering the country and preparing themselves for office, they could well believe that they were laying aside the impossible Hindu-Muslim problem."[14]

The fight for United Bharat involved essentially a battle of wills and visions. It is small wonder that the Congress leadership, with their will eroded and scuttled by exhaustion and temptation of power, lost the battle.

Such are, in short, the poisonous seeds from which sprouted the trisection of our great and ancient motherland – Bharatvarsha.

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27

For the Dream to Come True

THERE are quite a few nations in the world which have been artificially vivisected. The divided halves in all these nations do have an irrepressible urge and always strive for re-union. Korea has been split into North and South Korea, Germany into East and West Germany. Ulster has been sliced off from Ireland. Vietnam, which till recently had been cleft into two parts, has again become one after a long and bitter struggle against those who had kept them separate. All these divisions, as is well known, are the results of the machinations of imperialist powers. There is always the possibility that the divided halves will seize the first opportunity to nullify the unnatural division. Such a possibility need not be ruled out in respect of Bharat, Pakistan and Bangladesh too.

Islamic Basis for Pakistan Proves Hollow

The ideological basis for Pakistan lay in its claim of 'a distinctive Islamic identity which unified all Muslims into one homogeneous entity overriding all other bonds of common national inheritance with the Hindus'. But from the very day of inception of Pakistan, the hollowness of this claim came to the surface. Since the Bengalis formed an overwhelming majority of Pakistan's population, the West Pakistani ruling junta withheld elections. Further,

"The 1956 Constitution envisaged a parity in representation on the Pakistan National Council for the 45 per cent West Pakistanis with the 55 per cent Bengalis. ...The Urdu-speaking minority tried to impose on the Bengali-speaking majority Urdu, as the national language of Pakistan. According to the 1951 census, 56.40 per cent Pakistanis had registered themselves as Bengali-speaking in comparsion with only 3.37 per cent

who had recorded Urdu as their mother tongue."[1]

It was this domination of the West Pakistanis Which finally led to the break-up of Pakistan and the emergence of Independent Bangladesh in 1971. During the days of the Bangladesh struggle, an article in *New Statesman* of England described Pakistan as 'a State that never was.' Pakistan, it said, was geographically and culturally an unnatural, appalling creation. The unspeakable horrors committed by the Muslim junta and the Muslim army of West Pakistan on the Muslims of Bangladesh have further exposed the illusion of the Islamic claim of being the unifying basis of Pakistan's nationality.

That no high ideal inspired the authors of Pakistan except lust for power was evident by the avidity displayed by them in grabbing even the "truncated. mutilated, moth-eaten" Pakistan. Jinnah had in 1946 pleaded with Wavell, the Viceroy, to grant the Muslims their own bit of country however small it might be. Penderel Moon comments : "This tallied with the views of his political henchmen and of the ambitious Muslim civil servants who were secretly abetting them. To these men, avid of power. even a small dunghill was better than none at all."[2]

That the two-nation theory was no more than an ideological smokescreen for achieving political ends, has been exposed by Khaliquzzaman himself : "Mr. Jinnah took the earliest opportunity to bid good-bye to his two-nation theory in his speech on 11 September 1947 as the Governor-General designate of Pakistan and President of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan : '...We should begin to work in that spirit and in course of time all these angularities of the majority and the minority communities, the Hindu community and the Muslim community – because even as regards Muslims you have Pathans, Punjabis, Shias, Sunnis and so on and among the Hindus you have Brahmins, Vaishyas, Khatris, also Bengalis, Madrasis and so on – will vanish. Indeed, if you ask me, this has been the biggest hindrance in the way of India to attain freedom and independence and but for this we would have been a free people long ago. ...You may belong to any religion or caste or creed, that has nothing to do with the business of the State."[3]

Khaliquzzaman also says that "Suhravardy doubted the utility of the two-nation theory which to my mind also had never paid any dividends to us. But after the partition it

proved positively injurious to the Muslims of India, and on a long-view basis of Muslims everywhere."[4]

Pakistan, since its very birth, has been subject to severe internal stresses and strains. The growing demands for self-determination by the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan have often led to an unbridled repression of their people by the Government.

G. M. Syed, a former minister of Sind and a crusader for Partition, has now come out as a champion of his province and his language. He was launched the *Jiye Sind* movement against the lengthening shadow of the Urdu-speaking Muslims from outside and the domination of Urdu over them.

Strangely, there is not even a common accepted definition of the term 'Muslim.' The Justice Munir Commission, appointed in the wake of a raging crusade against the Ahmadi sect, wholly failed to give such a definition. The expert body reported: "Keeping in view the several definitions given by the *ulema*, need we make any comment except that no two learned divines are agreed on this fundamental ? If we attempt our own definition as each learned divine has done, that definition differs from that given by all others; we unanimously go out of the fold of Islam. And if we adopt the definition given by any one of the *ulema*, we remain Muslims according to the view of that *alim* but *kafirs* according to the definition of every one else."[5]

Would it be a surprise if a state based on such specious and artificial presumptions and devoid of any philosophical base would one day choose to enrich its life by returning to its ancient mother-culture ?

Pakistan in Search of Cultural Roots

The roots of culture binding the common mass of people of the three states have indeed gone very deep. Soon after Pakistan came into being, the Archaeological Adviser to Pakistan, R.E.M. Wheeler, wrote the book *5000 Years of Pakistan*. Fizlur Rahman, the then Minister of Commerce and Education of Pakistan, says in the preface: "This book has been complied for the purpose of presenting both to Pakistan and to the outside world a brief sketch of the imposing material heritage of Pakistan in the form of ancient building sites and cultures prior to the death of the emperor Aurangzeb in A.D. 1707. In

quantity, in range and in quality, this heritage is one of which the new dominion may be justly proud. It includes one of the great civilizations of Asia – the Indus Civilization of the third and second millennia B.C. ; it shares with the borderland of Afghanistan the primary glory of that remarkable and individual Buddhist art which flowered there in and after the second century A.D. ; the lively spontaneity of East Bengal endowed it, in the eighth and ninth centuries A. D., with a school of vital terracotta sculpture unapproached, of its kind, south of the Himalayas. Its achievements after the arrival of Islam, extending from the tiled mosques of Tatta to the Moghul, fortress of Lahore and the *Chhota Sona* Masjid of Gaur, are more widely familiar. The story of these things is worth the telling and retelling, in every school and university of the land. The heritage of Pakistan must be kept alive if the future is to grow strongly and healthily out of it. *It "will be no good to tie new leaves on to a dead tree."*[6] (Emphasis ours)

The book abounds in references to the prehistoric villages and cities of Mohenjodaro and Harappa Civilisation, the Rigveda, the Buddha the Enlightened One, Taxila, the 'great Ashoka who spread the light of Buddhism', the *Jatakas*, Hindu temples and fortifications, Pudar Nagar in East Bengal, *Aitareya Aranyaka* and *Aitareya Brahmana*, the Somapura Vihara built by Dharmapala, 'with a great temple of remarkable design and splendour', the cities under the Mauryas and Guptas, etc.

Wheeler says : "The strong personality of the country and its capacity to reconcile new elements with its traditional culture have more than once been emphasised."

With such a strong current of culture at its back, it is quite natural that its expression should often surface in Pakistan. Some years ago, the 2000th birth anniversary of the great Sanskrit grammarian, Panini, was celebrated there with due eclat. G.M. Syed, the Grand old Man of Sind, and quite a few other Sindi Muslims proudly claim Raja Dahir as one of their great heroes who fought and fell martyr in the act of saving Sind from the invasion of Mohammed Bin Kasim. The Punjab Students Union of Pakistan has resolved that their national day is *Vaishakhi*. Debal, a place near the confluence of the river Sindhu and the Ocean, was recently dug up. Among the items unearthed were *Shivalingas*, which they regard as part of their hoary heritage.

The Pakistan press duly published those photographs.

The late lamented Prime Minister of Pakistan, Z. A. Bhutto, had a big bust of Buddha in his room to remind everybody of Pakistan's glorious Buddhist tradition. Some Urdu poets in Pakistan are writing Hindi verses because of the "earthy coolness" of Hindi. In international meets, Indians and Pakistanis promptly gravitate to each other. They become oblivious of others and also of the sharp differences in their governmental policies. They speak in their common mother tongues – Punjabi, Bengali or Sindi. In their manners, their speech, and their bearings, Indians and Pakistanis appear indistinguishable for others.

All these factors indicate but one basic fact: the ancient national roots of Pakistan are essentially Hindu and are equally common to the rest of Bharatvarsha.

Nationalism More Powerful than Islam

It is true that in the first flush of its invasion the sword of Islam tore asunder the national fabrics of the various aggressed countries. But gradually the local cultural, linguistic and historical traditions asserted themselves and gave a new shape to Islam itself. Iran is Persia of old. Though it was converted to Islam, it did not totally forsake the beliefs of its ancient Zoroastrian religion. It built these features into Islam giving rise to the new Sufi faith, a product of that integration. In order to emphasise its own identity as distinct from the Arabs, Iran also adopted the Shia cult. It continued to regard as its national heroes Rustom, Sohrab and other non-Muslim historical personages who preceded Islam by centuries. Nor did Iran forsake its time-honoured tradition of Navroz.

Islam assumed a different shape in Turkey. Mustafa Kemal Pasha, the maker of modern Turkey, blended Islam with Western civilisation. He got the Koran translated into Turkish language, started *Namaz* in Turkish, and changed *Allah* of the Arabs into the Turkish *Taree*.

Indonesia affords a striking example of an Islamic country deeply imbued with the Hindu culture. To the Muslims who form 80 per cent of the Indonesian population, Islam has remained very much their personal faith; but their national culture continues to be Hindu – their culture before their conversion to Islam. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are their national epics – the

life-blood of their art, music and literature. The sacred Garuda is the name of their airlines. The epic hero Dronacharya inspires their defence academy. Most people bear the names of the illustrious heroes of ancient Bharat. The Indonesians affirm with pride that they have changed their religion but not their ancestors ! If any Indonesian visits Bharat, his relations at home urge him to bring to them the sacred waters of Ganga. Going to Hindusthan is for them more than a sight-seeing trip ; it is a pilgrimage.

Indonesia is a country physically far removed from Bharat, which came to be suffused with Hindu culture quite long ago. Later on, about four to five centuries ago, they were converted to Islam ; and they have since then adopted Islamic religious practices. Despite this, their adoration for Bharat and its heritage continues undiminished. In comparison, the physical and cultural nexus between Pakistan and Bharat is much more intimate. All the areas of Pakistan have in fact grown up as indivisible, organic parts of Bharat itself. Many a golden chapter in our cultural history was written, as we have already seen, in territories which now constitute Pakistan. This deep undercurrent of our national ethos is bound to spring to the surface sooner than later. The fragrance of our culture issuing forth from every speck of the soil of Bharatvarsha is bound to enliven their hearts and make them look forward with longing eyes to the day of reunion of the torn parts.

This was the inspiring picture visualised by Jayaprakash Narayan also. While speaking at the closing function of the Bihar Provincial Training Camp of RSS at Patna in November 1977, he said : "The imperialists were successful in vivisecting Bharat. Still, all of us – the people living in the three states of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh – verily belong to one single nation – Bharat. Our political entities may be different, but our nationality has always been the same, and that is Bharatiya."[7]

Economic Sorrows of Partition

The unnatural division of the country made one by history and geography, has left all the three parts, especially Pakistan and Bangladesh, in a very bad shape in the economic field also. On the agricultural front we find that while the Partition aggravated the problem of food shortage in India, and made Bangladesh

deficient in rice, it has left Pakistan with surplus of wheat. Bangladesh grows 70% of the raw jute of undivided Bharat, but the chief market is in Bharat and the jute factories are all situated just nearby, in West Bengal. While Pakistan has important raw materials like raw cotton, wool and hides and skins, Bharat has the corresponding manufacturing centres. At the time of Partition, Pakistan had just 14 out of 394 cotton textile mills in undivided Bharat, though she grew 40% of the long and medium staple cotton. Bihar and West Bengal abound in coal and iron while Bangladesh is acutely short of them and is now importing the same from South Africa, Australia and other countries at enormous cost. Bangladesh has surplus lime quarries and natural gas while Bharat would be the biggest and nearest consumer for these items.

The economy of the three states has received a further blow because of the serious defence problems arising out of the break-up of the indivisible organic entity that was undivided Bharat. The International Institute for Defence Studies, in its report for the decade of 70s, says that if India had not been required to spend so heavily on its borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh, its GNP would have risen by 3½ to 4%. The corresponding rise in Pakistan and Bangladesh would have been much more.

Further, "the business community remaining in Pakistan and Bangladesh is largely commercial in outlook and has little experience of industrial enterprise and technique. On the other hand, the business community in India, apart from its traditional enterprise, technique, efficiently and a developed money market, has also the privilege and facility of a large number of expert, research and technical institutions."[8]

On the whole, in spite of her handicaps, Bharat has been able to make up for her shortfalls in many fields and carry on, while the conditions of Pakistan and Bangladesh continue to be pitiable. Bharat, even after Partition, continues to be among the richest in its mineral resources, while Pakistan and Bangladesh have to depend on other countries for most of their mineral requirements.

It is not that these serious handicaps were not envisaged earlier. Khaliquzzaman had, even earlier to Partition, expressed his grave apprehensions about the economic viability of East Pakistan: "Unfortunately, these Divisions (which will come

under East Pakistan) lie in the easternmost corner of India with only one undeveloped port of Chittagong. The territory itself lies between the Brahmaputra and the several branches of Ganges with practically no possibility of development in future, owing on the one hand to frequent inundations from these big rivers and, on the other hand, to the absence of any mineral resources and high-level ground for the expansion of towns and cities. Millions and millions of Muslims in this area depend for their livelihood on the paddy and jute crops, which keep them engaged during the summer months, whereafter the rains set it leaving them idle without any work for the rest of the year. All trade in this area is mostly water-borne with all its consequent disadvantages. The area between Bihar and Calcutta, on the other hand, is full of iron and coal with a big railway system and rising industries. Territorial re-adjustment under such circumstances is bound to be disadvantageous to us."[9]

Bangladesh's sorrows over the absence of her control over her rivers should be one more poignant reminder of what Partition has meant to her. This is what the Bangladesh delegation complained at the Second Major Environmental Conference at Nairobi on May 16, 1982 : "Most of the rivers of our country originate outside our borders and also subject to disruption of water-flow because of upstream water diversions in the neighbouring country. This diversion of river water from upper reaches had had serious consequences and it took an acute shape during the last decade, resulting in serious adverse effect on the economy, ecology and overall envirnoment in the country. Withdrawal of water in the upstream also disrupted navigation and irrigation and affected forest and fisheries. This is a question of survival for our people. Playing with its flow at upper reaches is virtually playing with the life and death of the people of Bangladesh."[10]

Re-union Possible, If ... !

With the passage of time, forces of nature are bound to assert themselves pulling down the artificial barriers between the three parts which have caused so much of unnecessary heart-burning, hardships and scarcities, and giving rise to a natural rapprochement in all spheres of mutual benefit and happiness. The striking phenomenon of the European Common Market,

formed out of the various erstwhile warring European nations as one economic combine, should serve as a useful example for all the three parts of Bharat.

Doubtless, the powerful nations of the world are only too conscious of how mighty the reunified Bharat would become and the challenge it might pose to their own international position and prestige, and their present dominant voice in the affairs of the Third World. This is precisely the reason behind their propping of Pakistan with military and other aids and fanning its intransigence against Bharat, with a view to keeping Bharat down militarily and economically. Whoever has risen to power in Pakistan has also been capitalising on hatred of Bharat to reinforce his sway over the Pakistan mass mind, with the result, Pakistan finds herself emotionally estranged from, and at loggerheads with, Bharat. After the formation of Bangladesh, the new state too has been bitten by the same anti-Indian bug.

However, as days pass bringing with them bitter experiences, the rulers and people of Pakistan and Bangladesh might well realise that hatred of Bharat will not pay them in the long run. The recent military occupation of Afghanistan by Russia, bringing the latter's armies right on the borders of Pakistan, is one such eye-opener. The anxiety displayed these days by Pakistan, for a 'no war pact' with Bharat, stems primarily from this factor.

Countless people in those two states have ties of blood with families in Bharat. They are not blind to the sunshine of freedom, religious security and democracy available to their brothers and sisters in Hindusthan. The reign of dictatorship, oppression and political vendetta – so vindictive as to finish of even their former Prime Ministers and Presidents in Pakistan and Bangladesh – would naturally make their citizens sit up and compare them with the life in Bharat. Gradually, the truth would one day dawn upon them that they have not after all benefited from Partition and that their physical and mental happiness could result only from their union with Bharat and its cultural heritage.

But a reunification of the three parts of Bharatvarsha can become a possibility only if our people keep that goal constantly aglow in their bosom; only if the effulgent picture of a unified Bharat is engraved deep in their hearts; if they retain the sanctified memories of the holy land of five rivers, the cradle of

the Vedas; if they are not deaf to the call of Takshashila, Nanakana-Saheb and Sindhu, Chittagong and Dhakeshwari; if they constantly remind themselves that the blood coursing in the veins of the people of Pakistan is their own; if they will regard the Partition as unnatural, temporary and harmful in the extreme; if they are torn by the deepest anguish at the dismemberment of their motherland; if instead of covering up past mistakes they are honest enough to realise the terrible blunder that has been committed; and lastly, if they remember what Ram Manohar Lohia has said: "Repentance almost undoes an evil deed. The men whose souls should have been seared by the evil deed of partition are grovelling pleasurably in the dirt of their infamy. They would keep on descending to lower depths of conduct. If only they would repent of their past deed, they would cleanse themselves into a high and purposive state, and also add stature to their people. Let the people repent, not only for their own failings, but also for the crimes of their leadership"[11] – then alone can the Unified Bharat become a possibility.

The inspiring saga of how the Jews, exiled from their, homeland for 1,800 years and subjected to indescribable oppression all over the world, at long last established their free and independent nation in their ancient motherland, should be a lesson for us. From sire to son, from generation to generation, and from century to century, they had kept glowing in their hearts the dream of resurrecting their nation in Israel. The picture of the 'wailing wall' of Jerusalem in every Jewish home, and their prayer 'Next year in Jerusalem' on every Sabbath day, would remind them, scattered though they were all over the face of the earth, of their holy resolve. Thus could come true their dream of a hundred generations. And a nation which the world had dismissed from its mind as having been dumped into the dustbin of history, reincarnated itself rising, as if, from its ashes. Is the dream of reunification of Bharat any more impossible than this?

A Yogi's Vision and Prophecy

The call given by Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo in his birthday message on 15 August 1947 has, in brief, put the whole issue of Partition in its historical perspective and has presented the National Goal – a call which needs to be etched on the mind

and heart of every lover of Bharat : "India today is free but she has not achieved Unity ... The old communal division into Hindus and Muslims seems now to have hardened into a permanent political division of the country. It is to be hoped that this settled fact will not be accepted as settled for ever, as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled ; civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. India's internal development and prosperity may be impeded, her position among the nations weakened, her destiny impaired or even frustrated. This must not be ; the Partition must go ... By whatever means, in whatever way, the division must go ; unity must and will be achieved, for it is necessary for the greatness of India's future."[12]

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APPENDICES

I

Pandit Nehru on Congress Acceptance of Communal Award

(Autobiography, pp. 575-6)

"The Congress attitude to the Communal Award was extraordinary ... It was the inevitable outcome of their past neutral and rather feeble policy. A strong line adopted at an earlier stage and followed regardless of immediate consequences would have been more dignified and correct.... The Communal Award was a patent absurdity, and it was impossible of acceptance because, so long as it existed, any kind of freedom was unattainable. ... As it was, the British Government divided up India into any number of mutually exclusive compartments, each balancing and neutralising the other, so that the foreign British element could remain supreme. It made dependence on the British Government inevitable."

II

Pandit Nehru on 'Muslim-Nation' Theory

(Autobiography, p. 469)

"The Muslim nation in India – a nation within a nation, and not even compact: but vague, spread out, indeterminate. Politically, the idea is absurd, economically it is fantastic ; it is hardly worth considering... To talk of a 'Muslim nation', therefore, means that there is no nation at all but a religious bond ; it means that no nation in the modern sense must be allowed to grow ; it means that modern civilisation should be discarded and we should go back to the medieval ways ; it means either autocratic government or a foreign government; it means, finally, just nothing at all except an emotional state of mind and a conscious or unconscious desire not to face realities, especially economic realities. ... But this idea of a Muslim nation is the *figment* of a few imaginations only, and, but for the publicity given to it by the Press, few people would have heard of it. And even if many people believed in it, it would still vanish at the touch of reality."

III

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's Comments on Separatist Muslim Attitude

(*Speech in Constituent Assembly, 28-8-1947*)

"The New Nation of India will not tolerate disruptive tendencies in any form. If the process which was adopted in the past and which has resulted in the separation of the country is to be repeated, then those who want that kind of thing can have a place in Pakistan but not here. Here we are laying the foundations of one Nation; those who want to divide again and sow the seeds of disruption will have no place and no quarter here. ....But I now find a repetition of the same methods, which had been adopted when separate electorates were introduced in the country. In spite of ample sweetness in the language used by the Muslim League speakers, there is a full dose of poison in the method adopted. The latest speaker (Mr. Naziruddin Ahmed) has said 'we will lose the affection of the younger brother if we do not accept his amendment' (i.e., if there is to be joint electorates in the country with reservations of seats, then the candidates standing for the reserved seat should be required to secure not less than 30 per cent of the votes polled from his own community if he was to be declared elected). I am prepared to lose it, because otherwise it would prove the death of the elder brother. You must change your attitude and adapt yourself to changed conditions and do not pretend to say that 'our affection is very great for you'. We have seen the affection. Let there be no talk about it. Let us face realities. The point is whether you really want to co-operate with us or want to adopt disruptive tactics. I appeal to you to have changed hearts and not merely change your tongues because it would not pay. Reconsider your attitude. If you think this is going to pay, you are mistaken. ... I appeal to you to forget the past. You have got what you wanted. And remember you are the people who are responsible for Pakistan and not those who live in Pakistan. You led the agitation. What is it you want now? We do not want the country to be divided again."

IV

Joint Conspiracy of Christian Missions and Muslim League to Dismember Chhota Nagpur Tribal Belt from Bharat

(Extracts from the Report of the Christian Missionary Activities Enquiry Committee, Madhya Pradesh, 1957, headed by Justice K. C. Neogy)

P. 9

"The demand for Adivasisthan was accentuated along with the one for Pakistan in 1938. The Muslim League is reported to have donated Rs. one lakh for propaganda work. With the advent of political independence in India the agitation for Adivasisthan was intensified, with a view to forming a sort of corridor joining East Bengal with Hyderabad which could be used as a pincer movement against India in the event of war between India and Pakistan."

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42. "The separatist tendency that has gripped the mind of aboriginals under the influence of Lutheran and Roman Catholic Missions is entirely due to the consistent policy pursued by the British government and the missionaries. The final segregation of the aborigines in the Census of 1931 from the main body of the Hindus considered along with the recommendations of the Simon Commission which were incorporated in the Government of India Act, 1935, apparently set the stage for the demand of separate state of Jharkhand on the lines of Pakistan. The stages by which it culminated in the demand for Jharkhand will be clear from what follows.

43. In 1941, Sri M. D. Tigga wrote and published a book entitled 'Chhota Nagpur Ker Putri' (The daughter of Chhota Nagpur). It was printed in the Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Press, Ranchi. On page 19 of that book it is found :

'Looking to the economic and political backwardness of the adivasis, a Sabha was formed in 1898. Its original name was Chhota Nagpur Christian Association. As it grew, it became

somewhat strong in 1915 and its name became Chhota Nagpur Unnati Samaj. The same Sabha since 1938 is called Adivasi Mahasabha.'

"Thereafter there was the first session of the Adivasi Mahasabha Conference on 22nd January 1939 at Ranchi, which was presided over by Sri Jaipal Singh, M.P. (page 33, Adivasi Mahasabha Visheshank, March 1939). In the Presidential Address he said as follows :

'The Adivasis are all now one in their struggle for freedom from the tyranny of mere numbers. We offer a united front, an amazing fact in the annals of the aborigines. All the missionary institutions working here are with us, another remarkable achievement. Even the Bengalis are crying for separation, the Europeans and the Anglo-Indians are openly showing us their sympathy.' (*Ibid.*, p.34)

"He proceeded further to say, 'On no account must our educational facilities be reduced, but on the contrary the grants to the Missionary Societies should be augmented. The Missionaries are devoting their lives to our uplift and education...' (*Ibid.*, p. 36)

"Jaipal Singh continued his intrigues with the Bengal Muslim League throughout the whole of 1944 and 1945 and later in its working committee report of 1946 August, addressed to Mr. Jinnah, the Adivasi Mahasabha made a formal proposal for the constitution of 'Bangassam', The proposal was that this area would include Eastern Pakistan (Bengal and Assam) and Adivasisthan (Chhota Nagpur, Santhal Parganas and the neighbouring areas inhabited by the Adivasis and aboriginal tribes). In this confederacy, each area would have separate legislature but there would be joint management of Railways, Communication, Customs, Defence, Foreign Policy, Currency and Postal Services. The confederacy would be developed on democratic and socialistic principles in which all castes and communities would combine but at the same time would give scope for the peaceful penetration of Islamic culture amongst the inhabitants. It was also mentioned in this report that British help in this idea could be counted upon, as the formation of Adivasi-Pakistan confederacy would give free scope to Christian missions in Chhota Nagpur."

Revelations in Muslim League Leaders' Correspondence

Some of the details of the last-mentioned Jaipal Singh–Muslim League intrigues can be gleaned from the secret correspondence between Ragheeb Hassan of the Calcutta Muslim League and Abdul Halim of Ranchi.

In his letter dated 22-5-1942, Hassan expresses his keen disappointment that during the visit of Cripps, the demand for Adivasisthan was not put forth by the Adivasi Mahasabha, in spite of his repeated wires and letters to Jaipal Singh in that connection and pleading for their cause through the League's press and platform. Hassan also refers to Jinnah's prodding the Justice Party leaders of Madras to put up the demand for independent Dravidian state. He also outlines certain schemes which would involve the League more and more in the affairs of the Adivasis and finally stresses the need for maintaining utmost secrecy of all these moves.

A letter dated 14-8-1944 addressed to Abdul Halim from the Calcutta Muslim League President starts with a reference to Gandhi-Jinnah talks which were to start the next month. The League leader says, "Gandhiji has accepted the demand of Pakistan : the detailr remain to be thrashed out. Now, the question remains, what will happen to the claim of Adivasisthan and Chhota Nagpur. Chhota Nagpur desires to separate itself from Bihar, but if it were to join Hindusthan, it will be like jumping from the frying pan to the fire. The policy of Amery, the Secretary of State for India, appears to be "Chhota Nagpur, Santhal Pargana, Sarguja, Udaipur, Jeshpur, etc., should be carved out as Adivasisthan or the homeland of the Adivasis with Adivasi majority."

The League leader then goes on to formulate the scheme for the formation of a joint board in charge of Bengal-Nagpur Railway, Customs, Currency, Defence, Post, Foreign Policy, etc. The letter also reveals that "Sir Tourik Ameer Ali, Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court, is newly appointed as the Adviser to the Secretary of State for India. We have arranged for a meeting of Jaipal Singh with him. The idea is that the Adivasi Mahasabha should present a memorandum to the Secretary of State, and an emissary be sent to London to put in efforts there for Adivasisthan and the formation of its confederacy with Pakistan. I am sure the British will also

welcome this scheme because it will suit the interests of the Christian community also."

In another letter, the Calcutta League chief gives more details of how Jaipal Singh and the League should work hand in glove at Ranchi. He also suggests that Jaipal Singh should tour Hyderabad where he would be treated as a State Guest. "There," he says, "Jaipal Singh could meet a number of Adivasis and also certain other non-Aryan communities like Lingayats."

V

British Complicity in Pak Invasion of Kashmir in 1947

(Excerpts from DECCAN HERALD, Bangalore December 6, 1982)

HINT ON PAK PUSH INTO J & K WAS IGNORED

New Delhi, December 5: A retired army general has said he had alerted people concerned in the Defence Ministry about Pakistan's plans to seize Kashmir by force in October, 1947, five days before the invasion but no credence was given to his disclosure.

He had laid bare before Defence Minister Baldev Singh and Generals Kulwant Singh and Thapar details of "Operation Gulmarg," which he, as a senior staff officer of Brigade at Mirali, near Bannu, had come to know on August 20, 1947, while handling a top secret personal letter from the British Commander-in-chief of Pakistan Army to his Brigadier.

"They (the Defence Minister and two Generals) thought I was fibbing in a big way," Maj. Gen. O. S. Kalakat, who later rose to be the Chief Military Intelligence Adviser to the Cabinet Secretariat, writes in his book "Far Flung Frontiers," which President Zail Singh released today.

When the invasion began on the D-Day, a frantic search began to locate him and he was ushered into the presence of Mr. Nehru, who became livid with rage and burst out at his Defence Minister and the generals for being impervious to information given by a responsible officer, he writes.

It speaks of "British complicity" in the plan from the very outset, and says if this had been broadcast at that time, the whole complexion of Kashmir problem would have changed.

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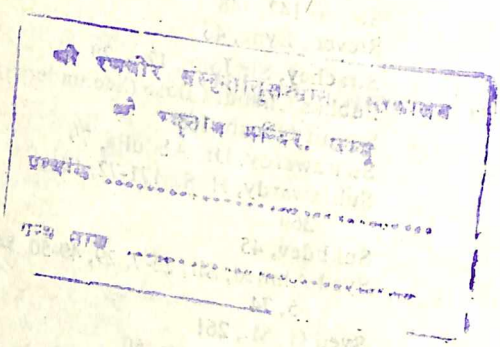

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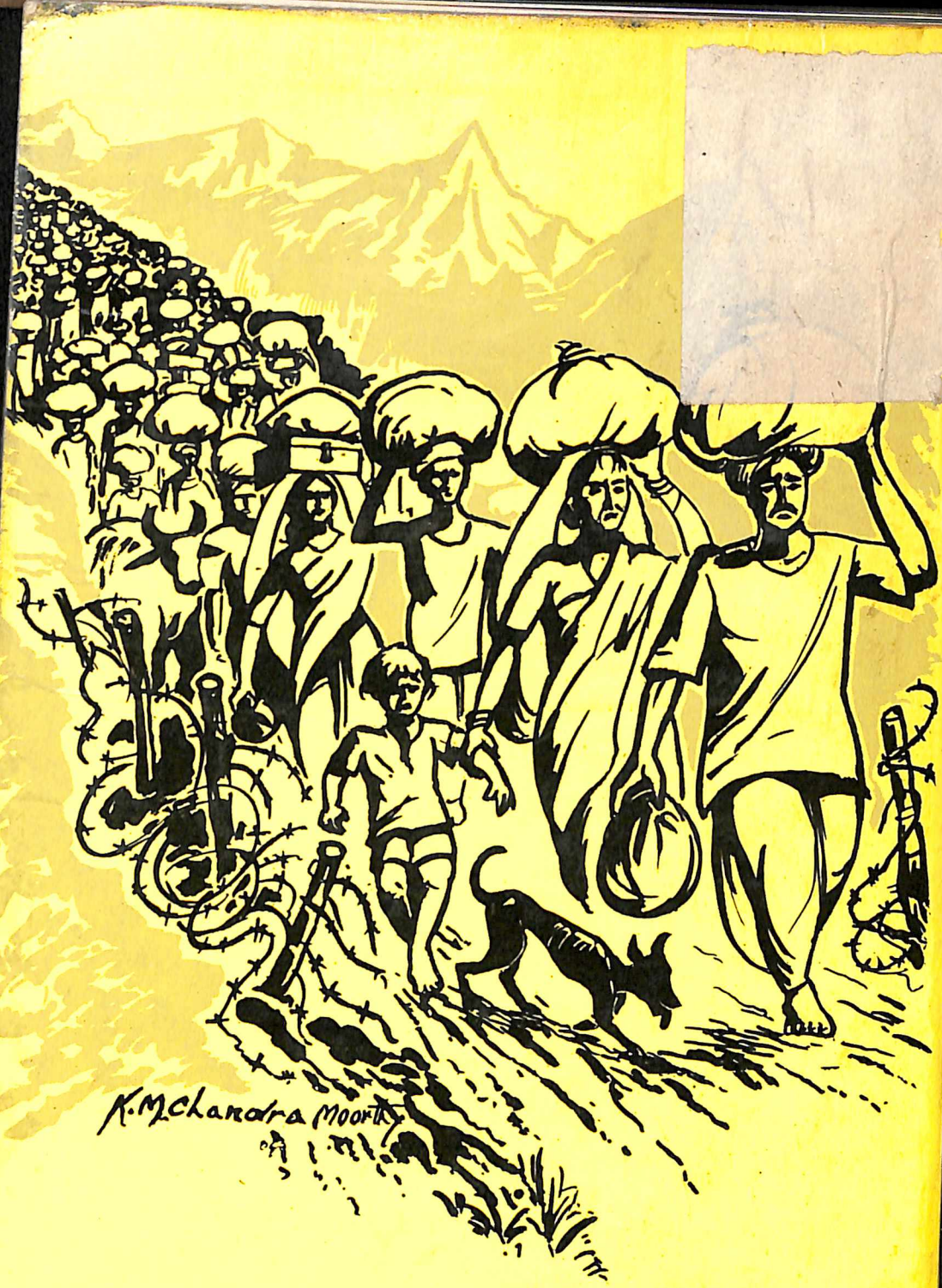

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